

MEASURING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA'S COMMITMENT TO
PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS AND DIVERSITY

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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By

BRIGITTA R. BRUNNER

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Chair: Linda Childers Hon
Major Department: Public Relations

A survey of 616 students at the University of Florida was conducted to measure students' perceptions of their relationship with the university and the university's commitment to diversity. Results of this survey are difficult to interpret as many responses were in the neutral range. However, satisfaction was the best indicator of positivity. Scores for control mutuality, or the power balance in the relationship, were weaker, especially for the items having to do with whether the university listens to students. Students indicated dimensions of exchange and communal relationships with the university. Students generally agreed that the university is committed to diversity, although some ambivalence was found about whether the university's commitment is truly deep. No differences were found when these relationship variables were examined across the demographic variables of gender, first in family to attend college, and year in

school. However, statistical tests revealed significant differences among ethnicity. The researcher concludes that students of different ethnicities have different experiences at the University of Florida.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Although the concept of relationships is implicit in the term public relations and both scholars and practitioners regularly use the term in explaining the value of public relations, neither scholars nor practitioners have defined the concept carefully or developed reliable measures of the relationship outcomes. A psychologist serving on a doctoral dissertation committee at the University of Maryland a few years ago expressed the shortcoming well when she said: "Just what do you people mean by relationships?" (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998, p. 3)

From the quote above it seems that relationships are a focus of public relations, but little research has been done to define the concept and develop ways to measure it (Huang, 1997). Making this point, Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997) state that "it appears that authors assume that readers know and agree on the meaning and measurement of the important concept of relationships" (p. 83).

Relationship is a term that is used frequently among practitioners when defining public relations. For example, Thomsen (1997) suggests that public relations is "the building of relationships and the management of communication between organizations and individuals" (p. 12). Relationships also are talked about in the academic literature--

We cannot say that excellent public relations can save an organization the costs of activism, regulation or litigation, that it makes employees more productive, or that it brings in resources from satisfied customers, donors, stockholders, or legislators. But good relationships do contribute to these bottom-line behaviors, and by looking at their value to the organization, we believe it is possible to establish the monetary value of public relations to an organization. (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Ehling, 1992, p. 86)

Even popular culture emphasizes the importance of relationships. In a flashback scene from the film “Jerry Maguire,” Tom Cruise is talking with his mentor. The mentor tells Cruise that the secret to a successful sports agency is strong, personal relationships with clients. But what exactly is that? What is a public relations relationship?

Relationship, as it is defined in public relations literature, is a primitive term yet it stands for “a complex phenomenon for which few practitioners and scholars share a common definition and set of measurements” (Broom et al., 1997, p. 86). Although Ferguson (1984) identified the need for research in this area in some 15 years ago, such studies are just coming to the forefront. Yet, without a definition and operational measurements, researchers cannot investigate relationships with any validity or reliability and practitioners cannot judge how well a relationship is or is not going (Broom et al., 1997; J. Grunig and Huang, 1998).

This issue of successful relationship management is of particular concern now because the demographics of the United States are changing. Each year, more and more women, people of color, people with disability, as well as gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals join college campuses and later become a part of the United States workforce. Because of this increasing diversity, it is only natural to find that many academic institutions are struggling to answer the following: How does a university relate to these many constituents? How does a university meet their needs? How does a university communicate with these publics? How does a university form relationships with these diverse groups?

It seems that if a university chooses to ignore diversity issues, it will lose a significant and strategic opportunity, and possibly incur many unnecessary costs. Many

examples of embarrassment and blunder resulting from inattention to diversity have been documented in the media. Gallaudet University's decision to hire another president who did not know sign language caused an outrage (Cole, 1995); "Niggers, Spics, and Chincs quit complaining or get out" was painted on a building at Smith College (Williams, 1989); fliers stating that "Blacks don't belong in classrooms, they belong hanging from trees" were circulated at the University of Michigan (Wiener, 1990, p. 64); and a "slave auction" was held at a University of Wisconsin fraternity (Wiener, 1989).

"Diversity is one of the largest, most urgent challenges facing higher education today. It is also one of the most difficult challenges colleges have ever faced" (Levine, 1991, p. 4). Dealing with this reality becomes even more difficult when one considers that a university is made up of many people from many different cultures and backgrounds. Each cultural and ethnic group conceivably could have a different definition of what diversity is. Institutions that have taken this challenge seriously demonstrate how hard the United States must work to be a multiracial nation (Bensimon & Soto, 1997).

Yet, many administrators and faculty members do not recognize the importance of diversity and some even consider it a threat (Hallock, 1994). "The institution most fundamental to social and economic advancements, the University, has been failing because its leadership has yet to confront fully its responsibility to a growing third of our nation's people" (Rosser, 1990, p. 224). This closed mindset, coupled with a failure of universities to achieve equality in the past 30 years, lends support to the need for further study in this area (Bensimon & Soto, 1997).

It is therefore imperative that the challenges and opportunities brought by diversity are not overlooked. Public relations scholars and practitioners must work together to define the term relationship and examine how public relations can build and maintain relationships with these diverse and increasingly vocal publics. The purpose of this study will be to explore the links between diversity management and building and maintaining effective public relationships.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What is Public Relations?

Public relations is a term used by many and defined in many ways. Some definitions focus on image, others on roles and models. Still others define public relations as opinion and conflict management. As Repper (1992) states, “I have yet to find two public relations practitioners who agree on much of anything--much less the definition of public relations” (p. 109-110). However, there seems to be a change in how practitioners and academics now conceptualize the field. Now, the focus of these definitions seems to be understanding, relationships, and relationship management, rather than persuasion, manipulation, and dominance (Dozier, L. Grunig & J. Grunig, 1995).

For example, J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, and Lyra (1995) state that public relations is a “vital part of strategic management. Its role is to use communication to build relationships with the strategic publics that shape and constrain the mission of the organization” (p. 164).

These definitions imply that public relations’ overseeing of relationship building and maintenance has become an important management function. But perhaps the best recounting of this changing emphasis in public relations comes from Ehling’s (1992) chapter in Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management:

In the first five editions of Effective Public Relations by Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, public relations activity was defined as

“a planned effort to influence opinion.” In the sixth edition, however, Cutlip, Center and now Glen M. Broom (1985) specified public relations as a “management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on which its success or failure depends.” This shift from influencing “opinion” to establishment of “mutually beneficial relationships” indicates an important change in the conceptualization of the primary mission of public relations management. (Ehling, 1992, p. 622)

To better understand these claims, one must first look at J. Grunig’s models of public relations and their impact on public relations research and practice. These models are press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical public relations, and two-way symmetrical public relations (see J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The press agency/publicity model focuses on public relations as propaganda, while the public information model sees public relations in a journalistic role of disseminating information (J. Grunig, 1989). Both of these are considered to be one-way communication models because the role of public relations is to give information and seek none from publics and are typical of the public relations practiced at the turn of the 20th Century (J. Grunig, 1989; Dozier et al., 1995). Press agency and public information are the least sophisticated of the models. These conceptualizations of public relations stress technical activity since they involve the generation of messages that then are distributed to publics without feedback (Dozier, et al., 1995). A monologue, not a dialogue between the organization and its publics, exists (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992).

The other two models focus on two-way communication flow and are evolving with the field (Dozier, et al., 1995). However, manipulation still can be a part of these models (Grunig, 1989). For example, the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations recognizes that publics have a voice and that they need to be heard. However,

the organization then uses this information to gather public support rather than to change and better the organization. This use of publics' voices therefore can be seen as manipulative. Asymmetrical communication, because it tries only to change the public, is not balanced (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992).

In contrast, the two-way symmetrical model benefits both the organization and publics (J. Grunig, 1989). An organization using this model of public relations not only hears the publics' voices but also brings about mutually beneficial change to both the organization's and the publics' awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. Because symmetrical communication adheres to an adjustment of both the organization and its publics, it is balanced (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992). Therefore, the intent of two-way communication is to establish and maintain productive, satisfying, and long-term relationships between an organization and its publics by fostering understanding between the two (Culbertson & Chen, 1997; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992; Ledingham, 1998). With symmetrical communication then, both the organization and the public compromise to change or develop and maintain a level of awareness, knowledge, or understanding about the other (Dozier, et al., 1995).

Symmetrical public relations "provides an ethical basis for public relations" because a dialogue exists between the organization and its publics (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992, p. 110). Making this point, Dozier et al. (1995) discussed the link between the two-way models and professionalism:

The two-way models are professional because they are based on a body of knowledge and a set of techniques used for strategic purposes: to manage conflicts and build relationships with publics. The one-way models are "craft" meaning that communication

techniques are used to generate messages, as if messages were ends in themselves. (p. 42)

Since these four models have been introduced, much literature and critique of them have been generated. Since the two-way symmetrical model is a largely normative one, many claim that often it is not feasible to practice this model in the field. As an answer to these criticisms, Dozier et al. (1995) introduced the mixed motive model. In a mixed motive model, both the organization and its publics pursue their own interests, but they also understand that the outcome of their communication must be satisfactory to both sides (Murphy, 1991). In other words, both publics and the organization practice asymmetrical and symmetrical communication in their dealings with one another. A zero sum game, defined in game theory as the unilateral pursuit of one's own interest, would be detrimental to both the organization and its publics because both would be seeking ways to better their own situation exclusively. Therefore, as Dozier, et al. (1995) state, a mixed motive game is more beneficial in the long run for both parties.

Dozier, et al's (1995) research indicates that the most effective organizations practice the mixed motive model. However, they are not limited to using this model exclusively. Although public relations practitioners may use two-way communication more often, they must possess the technical skills to practice one-way communication when appropriate (J. Grunig, L. Grunig & Dozier, 1997). So it seems the more effective organizations practice craft public relations, but the department also had the knowledge base to engage in strategic management (J. Grunig, L. Grunig & Dozier, 1997). J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1992) go on to state that although excellent public relations relies on the mixed motive model, the most effective communication still will be symmetrical. "In

practice, professional public relations involves both asymmetrical (compliance-gaining) tactics and symmetrical (problem-solving) tactics. However, we hypothesize that the most effective public relations, excellent public relations, will fall more toward the symmetrical end of the continuum than the asymmetrical end” (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992, p. 312). And as the field turns toward the use of two-way symmetrical and mixed motive communication, the concept of relationship becomes even more important.

Why Study Relationships?

Ferguson (1984) and more recently, Broom et al. (1997) and J. Grunig and Huang (1998), have worked to demystify the term relationship and develop factors that measure relationship outcomes. Ferguson (1984) suggested that relational attributes, such as dynamic versus. static; open versus. closed; degree of satisfaction; distribution of power; and mutual understanding, agreement, and consensus, could be used by academics and practitioners to measure and define organizational relationships. These beginnings helped Broom et al. (1997) develop a three-stage model of relationships that includes relationship concepts, antecedents to relationships, and consequences of relationships. They define relationship antecedents as “social and cultural norms, collective perceptions and expectations, needs for resources, perceptions of uncertain environments, and legal/voluntary necessity” (Broom et al., 1997, p. 96). Grunig and Huang (1998) simplify this description by stating that antecedents explain why organizations enter into relationships with certain publics. Consequences of relationships are: “goal achievement, dependency/loss of autonomy and routine and institutionalized behavior” (Broom et al.,

1997). In other words, consequences are outcomes that are most often thought about when evaluating a public relations program (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998).

J. Grunig and Huang (1998) have built on Broom et al.'s foundation and added to it from L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Ehling's (1992) work on the Excellence theory, strategic management, the models of public relations, and theories of conflict resolution. With this continued research, they have identified more concrete variables: antecedents describe the publics with which organizations need relationships and these needs are often situational; strategies are the ways to maintain a relationship; and outcomes are the consequences of the strategies (1998).

What is a Relationship?

This question has yet to be answered. Research can tell us why organizations and people enter relationships, what the outcomes of relationships are, what qualities define a good relationship and a bad one, and how to build and maintain a relationship. But pinning down an exact definition of relationship has been difficult.

"A good relationship does not have fear, intimidation or disrespect; it allows for honesty, disagreement, argument, risk taking and admissions of failure" (Marken, 1994. p.48). Ledingham (1998) adds that relationships flourish when there is balance, each party feels that the other has invested his/her time and him/herself in the relationship, both are committed to it, the parties trust each other, and they offer support.

Strong interpersonal relationships are based on a mutual fulfillment of needs by the parties. This concept can be extended to organizations because relationship development is the most basic level of an organization (Kreps, 1986). It also seems that a

good relationship has only one focus--too many perspectives will make the situation confusing (Dumoulin & Boyd, 1997). Dumoulin and Boyd's (1997) research seems to suggest that a good relationship focuses on one issue and limits the parties involved to the minimum number. Perhaps a clearer way to understand this idea is to think of a good relationship as a partnership among all necessary external and internal parties that focuses on one common goal (Eagon, 1994). J. Grunig and Huang (1998) support this notion and state that parties with a good relationship are more likely to have and attain appropriate, complementary goals.

Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

Much of the current knowledge in public relations about relationships comes from the research literature about interpersonal communication. Relationships are thought of as social, on-going conversations by interpersonal scholars and are generally categorized into three types: behavioral, cognitive, and systems perspectives (Berger & Kellner, 1964; Metts, 1998; Rogers, 1998). Behavioral relationships, according to Metts (1998), are distinguished by the patterns of behavior that are observed and most commonly are associated with "personal" relationships--ones in which the goals, needs, and expectations of the relational unit outweigh those of the individual. The cognitive perspective focuses more on how the relational partners make sense of behaviors than the behaviors themselves, while the systems perspective focuses on social relationships and how both the behavioral and cognitive perspectives can be incorporated to examine the interdependence of relational partners (Metts, 1998). It is perhaps this last approach, the

systems approach, that is most appropriate to public relations since interdependence produces the need for public relations (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992, p. 313).

All relationships, whether they are sexual, familial, platonic, or organizational, are socially constructed and maintained, and they are understood symbolically (Liska, 1998; Rogers, 1998). In short, they can be thought of as “communicative achievements” because the two or more entities involved are mutually influencing and interacting with one another in the process of interconnection (Hopper & Drummond, 1991; Rawlins & Hall, 1987; Rogers, 1998; Sigman, 1998). Stewart (1998) summarized this point well:

Among interpersonal scholars, the term “relationship” often simply labels the association or involvement between persons that is of research interest. This involvement may be by reason of blood, affection, marriage, employment, ethnicity or group membership, which means that the scholar may study family relationships, dating relationships, superior-subordinate relationships, intercultural relationships or some other association....In these cases, relationship is understood to be a systematic, irreducibly multiple, polysemous, situated co-constructed event or phenomenon identifiable separate from the parties who construct it. (p. 23)

Broom et al. (1997) agree that in order to truly measure relationships, researchers must develop indicators that are separate from the parties involved. However, J. Grunig and Huang (1998) believe that measuring perceptions, the approach taken in this study, is a valuable first step.

Some suggestions for building and maintaining a good relationship come from the literature on interpersonal communication as well. For example, J. Grunig and Huang (1998) adapt Stafford and Canary’s (1991) five strategies for maintaining romantic relationships--positivity, openness, assurance, networking, and shared tasks--to public relations. J. Grunig and Huang (1998) state that these five dimensions are analogous to the two-way symmetrical model of public relations.

For example, positivity means that both the organization and the public let each other know that they are happy with the relationship; openness means that both parties disclose to each other; assurance means that both the organization and the public know that the relationship is legitimate; networking means that both the organization and the public have common publics; and shared tasks mean that both parties have joint responsibilities (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998). Similarly, Broom et al. (1997) suggest that Berscheid and Peplau's (1983) identifiers of a close relationship--frequent impact on each other; the impact is strong; the impact is on diverse activities; and the presence of long-term interconnectivity--also can be applied to public relations.

In a review of 700 articles and books on successful interpersonal relationships, Wood (1995) identifies four necessary dimensions: investment, commitment, trust, and comfort in relational dialectics:

Investment refers to the time, energy, feelings, efforts and other resources given to build the relationship. Commitment involves the decision to continue a relationship. It adds the element of responsibility by suggesting that successful relationships involve facing relational difficulties together. Trust essentially refers to a feeling that those in the relationship can rely on each other. Dependability, forthrightness and trustworthiness are key components. Comfort with relational dialectics refers to the numerous forces which can pull a relationship in opposite directions. Wood identified autonomy/connection, novelty/predictability and openness/closedness as the three dialectics of relationships. (quoted in Ledingham, 1998, p. 59)

Wood's (1995) research suggests that interpersonal relationships are at their best when there is balance between the partners, both parties invest time and give their all to the relationship, and mutual commitment and trust exist. Again, these elements can be applied to public relations. As Toth suggests, public relations "should be considered interpersonal communication behavior because the public relations practitioner works in

a buffer zone between the organization and its publics” (quoted in Ledingham, 1998, p. 3).

Still other researchers have identified the following other factors as important to relationships: investment, relational dialogue, cooperation, mutual goals, interdependence/power, imbalance, comparison of alternatives, adaptation, shared technology, bonds, intimacy, passion, reciprocity, credibility, necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, stability, legitimacy, and openness (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Ehling, 1992; Ledingham, 1998; J. Grunig & Huang, 1998). Yet, J. Grunig and Huang (1998) have identified trust, control mutuality, relationship commitment, and relationship satisfaction as the most important outcome factors in an organization-public relationship. They identified these four features as the most pertinent because they appear consistently in both organizational and interpersonal communication literature (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998). They argue that most of these factors identified by other researchers are components of trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment.

Trust is widely accepted as a critical part of interpersonal, organizational, and organization-public relationships (J. Grunig and Huang, 1998). It is the cornerstone of successful relationships and can only be built with time (Davidson & Kapelianis, 1996; Dumoulin & Boyd, 1997). In fact, Vercic and J. Grunig (1995) go so far as to state that trust is the characteristic that allows an organization to exist (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998). Trust, however, is not necessarily an easily understood concept. As Hon and J. Grunig (1999) state, there are secondary components of trust. These underlying dimensions are integrity, dependability, and competence. If an organization has integrity, then publics believe that it is fair in its interactions. Dependability means that publics can rely on the

organization to do what it says. Competence means that the organization has the resources and ability to follow through with what it says it will do. Because trust is so critical, it is foolish for an organization to compromise trust for a short-term payoff. The long-term reputation the organization will acquire by being trustworthy will serve the organization and its publics better (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999).

Control mutuality is similar to the concept of power (J. Grunig & Huang, 1998) and refers to the degree of agreement that exists between an organization and its publics about who has the power to influence the other (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999). J. Grunig and Huang (1998) state that some imbalance of power is unavoidable in many relationships and that control mutuality recognizes this asymmetry in power. However, if one party attempts to have unilateral control over the relationship, the other outcome factors--trust, satisfaction and commitment--will suffer (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999). Therefore, it is more beneficial for parties to agree on the level of control mutuality in a relationship.

Having satisfaction means that the organization and its publics feel positively toward each other. Satisfaction also may mean that the benefits of keeping the relationship outweigh the costs of maintaining it (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999).

Lastly, commitment examines the degree to which both the organization and its publics believe that the relationship is worth spending time and resources on to maintain and promote (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999). Commitment therefore means that a long-lasting bond has been made between the organization and public.

A fifth and newly added indicator of relationships is the degree to which an exchange or communal relationship exists between the parties (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999). An exchange relationship is one in which the parties involved are interrelated only

because one has provided benefits in the past or has the potential to provide them in the future (Clark & Mills, 1993). The organization and public are in this relationship because of an obligation and debt. This type of relationship is most often encountered in marketing and can have an adverse affect on public relations since publics often expect organizations to do things for the community while receiving little or nothing in return (Hon and J. Grunig, 1999). A communal relationship provides benefits to both parties because each is concerned with the other's welfare; however, such arrangements are not completely altruistic since the relationship merely could be about attaining more goals by lessening opposition and increasing support (Clark & Mills, 1993).

Although interpersonal communications adds greatly to public relations' knowledge of relationships, an investigation of other communication literature is necessary as well. An examination of organizational communication can be especially helpful since organizations rely on relationships for their existence and survival (Kreps, 1986).

Organizational Communication and Relationships

Organizational communication can be thought of as "the process whereby members gather pertinent information about their organization and the changes that are occurring within it" (Kreps, 1986, p. 12). This definition implies that some form of interaction must be present for the members to gather information. Since the development and use of relationships are the primary functional activity upon which all organizations are built, it seems plausible that these interactions become relationships in

time (Kreps, 1986). However, not all organizational theory recognizes the importance of the relationship.

For example, classical theories are based on mechanistic properties (Kreps, 1986). Fayol's Theory of Classical Management, Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy, and Taylor's Theory of Scientific Management are generally referred to as the classical organization theories (Miller, 1995). These approaches are based on the idea that the organization is a machine and these theories have three general principles: specialization, standardization/replaceability, and predictability (Miller, 1995).

Taylor (1911) is probably the best-known supporter, and perhaps even the "father," of scientific management (Harris, 1993, p. 153). After examining how a typical production line worked, Taylor determined that different workers had different ways of doing the same job. He suggested that organizations could benefit if management studied each task, decided on the best way to perform each one, and then taught each employee the "proper" method. By doing such, management could make the operation more productive, drive up profit, and make owners happy (Harris, 1993, p. 154).

Fayol (1949) built on Taylor's ideas and added that organizations need a hierarchical pyramid of command to operate and achieve specialization (Harris, 1993). Fayol reasoned that efficiency would be optimized because there would be no question of authority or responsibility. Similarly, Weber (1947) suggested that people respond best to clear authority (Harris, 1993). However, he added that this authority had to be impersonal and based on rules not favoritism. As long as people did their job properly, they would be rewarded appropriately. Similarly, General Systems Theory is oriented toward goal accomplishment; there is little concern for individuals--they are subordinate

to the organization's goals (Kreps, 1986). The organization is thought of as a set of interdependent parts that work together with the environment to accomplish goals.

These organizational theories seem to support one-way, asymmetrical, top-down communication, which leaves little room for relationships to grow and foster. It is obvious from these examples that the individual is devalued and the structure and confines of organization rules are privileged (Kreps, 1986). It therefore seems logical that such organizations did not benefit from successful and positive relationships with publics. However, not all organizational theory has such grounding.

The search for less mechanistic theories began with the Hawthorne Studies. In the 1920s and early 1930s research was done with factory workers to see how they responded to manipulating lighting level. Although the original goal of these studies was to maximize output—clearly a scientific management goal—the findings led to the creation of a more “social” environment to increase productivity (Harris, 1993). To the researchers' surprise, they found no difference in workers' output when lighting was changed. What they learned was that the workers responded to a non-material reward – attention. It then was determined that more human interaction was needed to keep employees satisfied and increase productivity.

A step toward this humanistic approach is the Organizational-Culture Theory, which has its roots in anthropology and sociology. This theory recognizes that organizations have the characteristics of social cultures developed by human interaction and social experience (Kreps, 1986). Common understandings give the culture, or organization, order and logic (Kreps, 1986). Therefore, in an organization, culture is built by both informal and formal communication between employees and between

employees and the organization. This communication can take the form of gossip, organizational legends and stories, the grapevine, newsletters, slogans, handbooks, and many other means. It is therefore easy to see that relationships and two-way communication are integral parts of this organizational theory. Without relationships, there would be no human interaction and the culture would not grow.

Similarly, human relations theories recognize the limits of mechanistic theories and focus instead on the role of the individual in the organization (Kreps, 1986). Generally, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are considered the human relations theories. According to these theories, the individual is the most important variable of the organization and the needs of the individual have to be met to ensure the success of the organization.

Maslow (1943) proposed that humans are motivated by basic needs. These needs are subdivided into two categories--lower-order and higher-order needs. Lower-order needs must be met before the higher-order ones can be attained. The lower-order needs are physiological, safety, and affiliation needs (Miller, 1995). Physiological needs are those of the human body, such as earning a wage to buy food. Safety needs include the desire to stay free of danger like working in an environment that is physically secure. And affiliation needs refer to "belonging" or "love" needs much like creating social relationships with coworkers (Miller, 1995, p. 48).

The higher-order needs suggested by Maslow are esteem needs and the need for self-actualization (Miller, 1995). To achieve esteem needs, individuals must feel a sense of accomplishment. This recognition may be either external or internal (Miller, 1995).

For example, external esteem could be met by public recognition for a job well done and be actualized in the form of a bonus or raise. Internal esteem would be a sense of confidence that comes about from meeting the challenges of that job.

Maslow (1943) describes self-actualization as “becoming more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (p. 382). Self-actualization will be most likely different for each individual, but the process can be facilitated by organizations if they provide employment that allows for responsibility and creativity (Miller, 1995). Unfortunately, there is little evidence that supports Maslow’s theory (Miller, 1995). One reason for this lack of support may be that definitions of the needs are ambiguous and therefore hard to measure (Miller, 1995). However, this theory is still important because it reflects the shift from mechanistic organizational theory to one that recognizes the importance of social interaction, employee motivation, and managerial attention in the workplace (Miller, 1995).

Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory considers the issues involved in job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1976). He states that these issues are not the mere opposite of each other. Instead, Herzberg (1976) develops the idea that there are workplace characteristics that satisfy employees and a separate set that make employees unhappy. He goes on to label those characteristics that add to the intrinsic value of the work itself motivators and those that are concrete aspects of the organizational environment hygiene factors.

Motivators include responsibility, achievement, recognition, challenging work, and advancement in the organization (Miller, 1995). In contrast, hygiene factors include physical work conditions, salary and benefits, company policy, and quality of supervision

(Miller, 1995). Herzberg (1976) theorized that if the motivators were present, the employee would be happy and if the hygiene factors were absent, he/she would become dissatisfied with the job.

Early research into this theory found solid evidence that motivators and hygiene factors existed in the workplace (Miller, 1995). However, further research found that there were problems with labeling salary and benefits as a strictly hygiene factor and advancement as a motivator only. The problem lies in that salary and benefits and advancement could both be considered sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Miller, 1995). Again, as with Maslow's work, Herzberg's theory continues the change in management's mindset toward human relations.

McGregor (1960) believed the difficulties between management and labor were based on management's opinion of workers and not competing goals (Harris, 1993). Theory X is based on distrust and authority. According to this theory, management assumes that all workers are lazy, indifferent to organizational needs, and need constant supervision. Management, therefore, needs to rely on manipulation, threats, and control to meet organizational goals.

In contrast, Theory Y suggests that when treated fairly and given meaningful work, people will welcome the change and become more productive. This theory is based on self-actualization and responsibility and the idea that the individual can add much to the organization (Harris, 1993). Again, these theories are hard to test because of their broad scope; however, the importance of McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y is not that it has been substantiated by empirical evidence, but rather that it has helped to uncover the humanistic elements of organizational functioning (Miller, 1995).

According to Kreps (1986), organization-culture and human resources theories are most concerned with satisfying the individual and emphasize the importance of the individual organizational members, informal communication, and group norms. On the other hand, classical and systems theories emphasize planning and control (Kreps, 1986). From these descriptions, it seems that in order to examine relationships and two-way symmetrical communication in organizations, organization-cultural and human resources theories need to be utilized. "The nature of relationships between organizations and stakeholders – which may be publics or other organizations – emerges, then, as a central concept in a theory of public relations and organizational effectiveness" (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Ehling, 1992, p. 81). Therefore, it appears that although there is recognition of organizational relationships and their effect on the quality of public relations and other communication devices, this knowledge has not been incorporated into a theory, per se (J. Grunig, L. Grunig & Ehling, 1992). And this is the gap in the literature that public relations is attempting to close.

Public Relations and Relationships

Literature about public relations often suggests the importance of relationships but the concept of relationship has yet to be universally defined. For example, Kreps (1986) defines public relations as "the ongoing management of communication relationships among organizations that share an interorganizational field" (p. 244). This definition focuses on relationships between organizations but it does not explain what a relationship is and it does not even consider how publics are a part of communication. Huang (1997) offers a more detailed definition that again focuses on the importance of relationships in

public relations: "The goal of public relations not only includes the dissemination of information, but also involves facilitating mutual understanding and resolving conflicts between an organization and its publics" (p. 7). Dozier et al. (1992) approach the definition similarly when they state, "The strategic success or failure of communication programs is determined by relationships between organizations and key publics" (p. 32). Center and Jackson (1995) even state that the proper term for public relations is actually public relationships. And L. Grunig, J. Grunig and Ehling (1992) go so far as to suggest that relationships are the essence of public relations. "Building relationships--managing interdependence -- is the substance of public relations. Good relationships, in turn, make organizations more effective because they allow organizations more freedom--more autonomy -- to achieve their missions than they would with bad relationships" (p. 69). It is obvious then, that the term relationship is frequently found in the academic literature, but why then is the concept of a relationship often overlooked as a focus of empirical scholarship?

According to Broom et al. (1997), Pavlik observed back in 1987 that little public relations research focused on relationships. Kruckeberg and Stark (1988) suggest that American public relations has focused, nearly exclusively, on persuasion, which has led to a narrow definition of the field. Kruckeberg and Stark (1988) went on to call for an increasing emphasis on building community via stable yet flexible relationships based on mutual understanding and trust (Culbertson & Chen, 1997). Ledingham (1998) seems to support this view and states that what public relations needs is a conceptual change to define the field in terms of what it is--relationship management.

As Sallot (1996) suggests, if public relations is truly the business of relationship management, then it needs to reevaluate itself. Public relations needs to shift its focus to organizational relationships with publics, how these relationships are built, and the impact these relationships have on both the organization and its publics. To do this well, public relations needs to integrate concepts from other disciplines like organizational and interpersonal communication (Ledingham, 1998). "Public relations professionals pride themselves on the personal touch--the relationship between clients, the media and the practitioners -- the perfected 'human contact'" (Capps, 1993, p. 24). This perfected human contact can be attained only if a mutual, strong relationship between an organization and its publics exists.

A suggestion for how to foster public relations relationships and build the field's reputation as a management function is to support diversity programs and bring them under public relations' wing. One arena in which such programs can be observed and examined is a college campus. Improving diversity, and subsequently relationships, on campus and in the U. S. workforce is not just an altruistic, politically correct goal; it is necessary for both social and economic reasons in the 21st century (Carnevale, 1999).

Diversity and Higher Education

Diversity has become a buzzword and some even say it is a smoke screen hiding the real issues of minorities because a common understanding about the term's meaning is lacking (Allen, 1995; Levine, 1991; Myers, 1997). In a study about race, gender, and ethnicity on college campuses, Levine (1991) discovered that although most college administrators believed diversity to be important, few were able to define the term or

express what their diversity programs were meant to achieve. Since the term is so central and commonly used, it has become overextended and indiscriminate (Adelma, 1997).

When diversity programs were first introduced, they were meant to increase the number of African-American students in college; now they work to increase any underrepresented group of students, faculty, or administrators to a level proportionate to society's populations (Levine, 1991). "Diversity now includes everything from sexual orientation to disability status" (Myers, 1997, p. 26). Myers (1997) cautions that once diversity attempts to accomplish goals far beyond its original attempt to rectify racial discrimination, it can and often does lose its definition.

Higher education's first steps are, therefore, defining what is meant by diversity and setting goals for its achievement. If these tasks are not done, confusion and non-commitment no doubt will follow. "The less clear the term becomes, the more it is read, cynically, as a euphemism. The more cynicism, the less likely policy grounded in the term will be effective" (Adelma, 1997, p. 36).

Diversity programs of the 1990s are the successors of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1960, prior to the civil rights movement, 94 percent of college students were White (Bensimon & Soto, 1997). Civil rights is a comprehensive set of rules that institutions must follow and strongly enforce. If an institution does not comply with the nondiscrimination requirements of civil rights, it will lose federal funding (Higham, 1997).

From this beginning, civil rights leaders worked to see that equal employment opportunity was available to all African-Americans. To ensure this right, they pursued compensatory preferential hiring practices (Higham, 1997). President Lyndon Johnson is

quoted as saying the following about equal opportunity: "Yes, it is a good idea, but don't call it compensatory. Call it affirmative action. It's moving the nation forward! It is going out of our way to bring minorities in that have been excluded! That is positive affirmative action" (Higham, 1997, p. 246). And so the term affirmative action was coined.

Now some 30 years later, there are questions about the utility and fairness of affirmative action to society. Supporters state that without it, all students and society will lose because affirmative action has not attained its goals (Rowan, 1997). Renner (1998) documented that although there has been an increase in minority enrollment at colleges, this increase is negligible when compared to increases in white students.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, from 1965 to 1994, the number of white college students rose from 5.3 to 12.2 million despite a decrease in high school graduates (Renner, 1998). In this same time period, minority enrollment rose from 400,000 to 2.8 million with an increase in high school graduates (Renner, 1998). Renner (1998) states these disproportionate numbers suggest that either standards have been lowered or opportunity has been increased for whites and not minorities in the last 30 years. This trend therefore would be in direct opposition to what opponents of affirmative action argue--that it gives minorities an unfair advantage.

Opponents of diversity and affirmative action believe that these initiatives reflect a liberal agenda; such policies emphasize differences and breed contempt; and ethnic or racial background is used as an excuse to admit and graduate students who would not otherwise make it ("Diversity on campus found to be beneficial, poll shows," 1998). As Clegg (1999) argues:

If diversity can justify preference in favor of certain groups that are “under-represented,” then logically it can justify negative weights on those that are “over-represented.” There is simply no way to justify the former without justifying the latter. Saying there are “not enough” Blacks and Hispanics is no different than saying that there are “too many” Jews and Asians. (p. 34)

Clegg (1999) continues to suggest that diversity causes students to be rewarded or punished based on their skin color and ancestry which further stigmatizes the beneficiaries of diversity programs in both the eyes of their peers and members of their own race. Lastly, Clegg (1999) argues that ensuring a racial mix of students is nothing more than “discrimination for its own sake” (p. 35).

Such backlash at the university level has been seen most recently with decisions to end race-based policies. In 1995, the California Board of Regents voted to end its affirmative action policy (Bensimon & Soto, 1997; Renner, 1998). California has since seen a drop in minority enrollments. The number of African American, Mexican American, and Native American students admitted as the first freshman class without affirmative action at Berkeley has dropped nearly two-thirds (Burdman, 1998). This enrollment reflects a decline by 70 percent among African-Americans, 61 percent among Mexican-Americans, and 63 percent among Native Americans (Burdman, 1998). “In perhaps the starkest sign of the efforts of the UC regents’ decision to end affirmative action, only 16.5 percent of underrepresented minority applicants were admitted--compared with 50 percent last year” (Burdman, 1998, 9A).

Similarly, a Texas appeals court decided that race-based admissions to the University of Texas Law School would end and a U.S. district court in Northern Alabama has enforced the diversification of some historically black colleges and universities by requiring that more white students be recruited (Renner, 1998). Renner (1998) argues

that by ending affirmative action, higher education contributes to the misconception that minorities have gained an unfair advantage from such policies, and it distorts the truth by suggesting greater social justice will be achieved by ending these policies. In the words of UC Ethnic Studies Professor, June Jordan, talking about the university's enrollment, "These decimated numbers prove that we do absolutely need affirmative action policies" (Burdman, 1998, 9A).

Some scholars contend that there are several misconceptions about affirmative action: 1.) Past inequalities in access and opportunities that racial and ethnic minority groups have suffered have been sufficiently addressed and no longer require attention; 2.) Merit can be defined by test scores; 3.) Fairness is best achieved through race-neutral policies; and 4.) Diversity programs benefit only students of color (Chang, Witt-Sander, & Hauta, 1999). Chang et al. (1999) state that race is and always has been one of the most important and salient markers of opportunity; Whites as a group have historically been afforded explicit affirmative action and have been afforded many opportunities at the expense of minorities. They continue this line of thought adding that a colorblind approach to college admissions disregards the reality that race plays an important role in society.

Treisman (1992) states that universities have traditionally suggested that minority failure is due to low income, low motivation, poor academic preparation, and a lack of family support--all items over which an institution has no control. In research, Treisman (1992) found that these four beliefs are unfounded and states the solution to the problem is creating a community of peers among all students.

Chang et al. (1999), Steele and Aronson (1995), Kurlaender and Orfield (1999), and Bowen and Bok (1998) all argue that test scores are not an appropriate measure of merit as they do not accurately measure factors that denote success--ability, talent, and motivation. Chang et al. (1999) contend that basing admissions on test scores such as the SAT creates a homogeneous student body since it reduces the proportion of minority students admitted to a school.

Steele and Aronson (1995) support this claim about the limitation of standardized tests with their research on stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is a social-psychological phenomenon that can arise from widely held negative stereotypes about one's ethnicity. For example, Steele and Aronson (1995) suggest that African-American students face stereotype threat whenever they are asked to perform a test of their intellectual ability. They state that stereotype threat therefore may not only influence African-American students' SAT scores, but it also may cause them to not include scholastic achievement in their self-identities.

Kurlaender and Orfield (1999) further this argument and say that stereotype threat suggests that minorities' lower test performance can be in part the result of the test-takers' fear of confirming a negative stereotype. Therefore, universities must challenge what "qualified" means since no single predictor can capture a students' potential for success.

Chang et al. (1999) state that race-neutral policies do not work either as racism has always and still does exist in society. They suggest that using the same standards to judge minority and non-minority students is unfair because differences in power, social perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs put minorities at a disadvantage. Bowen and Bok

(1998) take this argument even further stating that race-neutral policies will not only reduce the overall probability of an African-American student being accepted to a university to exactly one half that of a Caucasian student's, but also race-neutral policies likely will reduce African-American enrollments to the levels they were at in the 1960s--a drop of 50 to 70 percent.

Lastly, scholars contend that the diversity of a university's student body benefits all students. Students learn to be accepting of other cultures, participate more in community and civic organizations, and feel a greater commitment to racial understanding when they are engaged in a diverse environment (Chang et al., 1999). Further, retention rates and students' overall satisfaction with universities increase when there is a more diverse representation in the student body (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Chang et al., 1999). And, Gurin (1999) adds that a strong institutional commitment to diversity is associated with less racial tension and higher GPAs for all students.

Chang et al. (1999) state that the body of research on diversity and higher education suggests the following conclusions:

- (1) there is clear evidence of continuing inequalities in educational opportunity along racial categories; (2) test-based definitions of merit are incomplete; (3) race is a major social psychological factor in the American consciousness behaviors; and (4) racially diversified environments, when properly utilized, lead to quantitative as well as qualitative (otherwise unattainable in homogeneous environments) improvements in educational outcomes for all parties. (p. 16)

These research results imply that higher education has a responsibility to the rest of society to lead the way in diversity programs (Hill, 1991; Rosser, 1990). To live up to the responsibility of seeker of truth and knowledge, higher education must be the "carriers of civilization" and the "engines of change" and challenge overt and covert

attempts to limit ethnic diversity at institutions of higher learning (Rosser, 1990, p. 224; Jones, 2000). As Bowen and Bok (1998) state universities must help to build a society in which access to positions of leadership and respect is not limited by race. "Institutions of higher education have an obligation, first and foremost, to create the best possible educational environment for the young adults whose lives are likely to be significantly changed during their years on campus" (Gurin, 1999, p. 36).

Chang et al. (1999) state that universities must grapple with two major questions: "1.) To what extent can students receive a meaningful education that prepares them to participate in an increasingly diverse society if that institution's student body and faculty are not diverse? and 2.) To what extent will a university be able to address the issues that are central to diverse societies if they do not have an adequate representation of that diversity?" (p. 15). Treisman (1992) furthers this argument stating that the survival of institutions rests on their finding acceptable solutions to America's changing demographics.

According to the Digest of Education Statistics 1993, in the Fall of 1991, 33 percent of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools were members of minority groups such as African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans; in 1995, 2.5 million college students were minorities (Neuliep, 1995). These figures indicate the need to devise and implement policies that are inclusive of all people so that a democratic society that respects diversity and enables all individuals to participate fully in all aspects of American life (Treisman, 1992).

With such changes in the population, it is inevitable for different cultural norms and values to emerge and potentially cause tension (Allen, 1995 & Henderson, 1992).

Therefore, as higher education moves into the 21st Century, learning about and interacting with diverse people will be increasingly more important (Rowan, 1997). Universities must make campuses places where students from different backgrounds can take part in conversations and share experiences to help them to understand the perspectives of others (Gurin, 1999).

A diverse student and faculty population is intrinsically valuable to education and the failure to have a diverse group of students and faculty diminishes the quality of the educational process and original scholarship (Rowan, 1997; Sudarkasa, 1987). Chang et al. (1999) state the greater representation of women and ethnic minorities changes an organization's climate. Since, female and minority faculty members are more likely to use active and student centered learning methods, include different perspectives in the curriculum, and engage in research on issues of race and gender, their presence promotes a more positive student environment (Chang, et al., 1999). The incontrovertible notion of diversity is that by encountering a wide variety of people from different backgrounds, students will become better citizens of the nation and world (Adelma, 1997).

Bowen and Bok (1998) argue that quality education is dependent upon the diversity of an institution's student body. They claim that if students are in a classroom of similar peers, they will not learn as much as they would in a classroom of students who are diverse. Without this diversity, students are not given the opportunity to benefit from the insights of other people; nor are they instilled with the values necessary to ensure an expanded democracy--these insights and values are needed by students as they prepare for life in a pluralistic society (Rosser, 1990). Rosser (1990) adds that the curriculum

should be grounded in the knowledge of different cultures, languages, and experiences while it also reveals the interdependence of the human experience.

However, it is important to remember that the best way to learn about others is through their and not our reference frames (Bensimon & Soto, 1997). If a goal of diversity is to create an organizational climate that values the individual strengths of many, it is attainable only by inclusion (Henderson, 1992). According to Adelma (1997), the people who define diversity, set the diversity agenda, and formulate the diversity policies are often the majority who see the “others” as different. In order for diversity programs to work, everyone must be involved in the planning process (Adelma, 1997; Henderson, 1992).

One positive example of an inclusive learning experience, is the -ISM (N.) project, distinctively named to remind all of a politically significant suffix that is also a noun (Childers, 1997). -ISM (N.) was the first national education and video documentary that focused on college students and diversity (Childers, 1997). Among the benefits participants spoke about was the ability to use their own experience. Many of the project’s participants say they benefited from 1.) expressing something about themselves to other students and 2.) working intensively with other, different students (Childers, 1997). In essence, the video was part self-expression, part community building (Childers, 1997).

Since students come to universities at a critical time in their development as human beings, diversity is essential. During this time, students define themselves in relation to others, they experiment with roles, and begin to make permanent commitments to careers, social groups, and personal relationships (Bowen, 1999; Gurin, 1999). Since

residential campuses separate students from their past, university environments are especially influential in students' identity development (Gurin, 1999). Students attending a racially diverse campus are exposed to new ideas, relationships and roles. In addition, these students engage in more complex and deeper thinking; a homogeneous campus may cause students to be more accepting of the perspective offered by an authority figure, while students at a diverse campus are forced to debate their points of view rather than subcome to group think (Gurin, 1999).

Bowen and Bok's (1998) survey data reveal that college graduates believe there is value in having a diverse student body. For example, their research found that 79 percent of White graduates believed their alma maters should retain or strengthen their race-sensitive policies. In addition, these graduates believe that experiencing diversity during college contributed to their ability to work well with members of other races.

Yet, diversity does not end with education. It is also an important aspect of workforce management and the betterment of American society. The Ford Foundation Campus Diversity Initiative poll conducted in February and March 1998 found that the majority of Florida voters believe higher education diversity initiatives can help bring together society--a society that they fear is continually divided ("Floridians see many benefits to diversity in college education," 1998). In fact, seven out of 10 voters reported that it is very important for higher education to prepare graduates to get along in a diverse society ("Floridians see many benefits to diversity in college education," 1998). As Carnevale (1999) suggests, if higher education does not produce diverse college graduates, qualified diverse workers will not be available to the workforce.

A racially and ethnically diverse university student body has far-ranging and significant benefits for all students, non-minorities and

minorities alike. Students learn better in such an environment and are better prepared to become active participants in our pluralistic, democratic society once they leave school. (Gurin, 1999, p. 15)

Diversity in the Workforce

Overall workforce growth is slowing and by the year 2000, will only be one-third of what it was in the 1980s. By the year 2000, growth is likely to be approximately one percent per year...Almost all American workforce growth, as small as it might be, is expected to come from women, blacks and Hispanics or Asians. The mix is changing. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, most of the retirees leaving the workforce were white men. By the year 2000, white males are expected to account for one-half of those leaving the workforce, further emphasizing its minority profile. Of an estimated 150 million workers in the year 2000, approximately 36 million, or over 20 percent, are expected to be black, Asian or Hispanic. White women are expected to comprise one-third of the total labor pool; white and minority women together are likely to comprise just under 50 percent. (Burack, 1993, p. 112-113)

As can be seen by the above quote, the changing workforce brings many implications for diversity management (Wheeler, 1995). The good news about these changes is that diversity has become a part of everyday language in organizations and it is an issue that is being addressed; the bad news is that discrimination complaints are not uncommon; and the perplexing news is that some managers still ask why it is necessary to spend money, time, and energy on diversity management (Gardenswartz, 1998).

Until recently, diversity was not an issue at corporations. "The corporation dictated a mold for up-and-comers to fit: Always arrive early and work later, never turn down a transfer to another city, dress like so, talk like so, express the right opinions. 'Managing' was largely a manner of enforcing the mold and rewarding those who fit it best" (Gordon, 1992, p. 24). Such mindsets still are prevalent today.

Some common barriers to diversity initiatives are: existing corporate culture, resistance to change, lack of understanding, difficulty integrating diversity into business strategy, competition with other corporate issues, and resistance on the part of senior management (Wheeler, 1995). In a 1992 Hay Group Survey of 1,405 companies, only five percent thought that they were doing a very good job of managing diversity (Stoner, 1997). Similarly, a 1997 survey of Georgia's corporate leaders by Handler & Associates found that 52 percent of corporate leaders were satisfied with the diversity of their management teams. However, when questioned further, 87 percent of these satisfied corporate leaders said that only up to 10 percent of their senior management was female and/or non-Caucasian (Stoner, 1997).

One problem is that diversity has become an all-encompassing word. Despite common usage, there is no consensus in the business community on the meaning of the term diversity. Definitions of the term range from narrow to very broad. Narrow definitions in the United States generally track federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law, defining diversity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, age, national origin, religion and disability. The broadest definitions encompass sexual/affectional orientation, values, personality characteristics, education and background characteristics such as geographical origin and economic status. (Wheeler, 1994, p. 10)

Some look at diversity as those strengths and weaknesses that make everyone an individual (Gordon, 1992; Laurie, 1997). Others consider diversity a business necessity: "Diversity is not an altruistic venture nor an experiment in social engineering foisted upon organizations. Responding to and capitalizing on a pluralistic workforce is a strategic business imperative to ensure organizational viability" (Gardenswartz, 1998, S2); "Managing diversity is not primarily about ethics or social responsibility or 'doing

the right thing'...It's about human performance. It's about making a profit. It's about remaining competitive" (Gordon, 1992, p. 24).

The mandate for diversity stems from three business goals: 1.) attract, hire, and promote the best people; 2.) stimulate all employees to contribute their best ideas; and 3.) better understand and serve different markets and market segments (Wheeler, 1995; Laurie, 1997). In other words, diversity is not just a feel-good term; it is vital to an organization's existence to attract and keep people of many backgrounds (Wheeler, 1996).

Diversity initiatives then can enhance and improve the organization's current practices and functions while working toward the goal of business success. As one diversity consultant says, "Diversity is not adding to the business, but multiplying the possibilities" (quoted in Wheeler, 1995, p. 30).

Leading organizations incorporate diversity into their existing culture by instilling the belief that a diverse workforce can generate new ideas, which helps an organization be more responsive to business markets (Wheeler, 1995). Baba (1995) says this vitality is due to the changing heterogeneity of American society: "The world is a colored shirt with white buttons. America is beginning to look more like the world" (quoted in Strenski, 1994, p. 32).

One of the first diversity initiatives developed by a corporation is the Community Internship Program (CIP) established by UPS in 1968 (McCune, 1997). Managers are chosen for four-week internships at non-profit organizations in places such as Chicago, New York, and Chattanooga. During the internship, the managers perform tasks that fit the non-profit's needs and the manager's skills. This program was established to help

managers understand the needs and differences of people and, therefore, lead to better management skills. Since its inception, about 1,000 executives have participated in the program at a cost of \$10 million to the company.

UPS has no problem justifying the cost since it believes the benefits to the company are worth it. It helps participants develop sensitivity and hone their problem solving techniques. "Our founder, Jim Casey, believed you couldn't understand someone's problems unless you were in their shoes," says Preble, manager of UPS corporate training. CIP gives UPS managers that opportunity. (McCune, 1997, p. 13)

The real surge in diversity programs came in the 1980s. "Many fledgling corporate diversity programs were created in the late 1980s as a result of a seminal and provocative Hudson Institute study-- Workforce 2000--that asserted that nearly five-sixths of workforce growth at the beginning of the 21st century would come from nonwhites, women and immigrants" (Stoner, 1997, p. 6; Laurie, 1997).

These programs, however, have not always had positive outcomes. They are blamed for "knee-jerk diversity," which is mindless hiring of minorities to fill quotas (Stein, 1997). This situation has lead to tension between minorities and non-minorities and it misses the point of diversity: diversity isn't just about parity; it's about appreciating differences (Stein, 1997; Baba, 1995).

The aim of diversity programs has to shift from recruiting and hiring to retaining and truly appreciating what diverse employees bring to the workforce. Progressive managers possess an intellectual awareness, but they need to go beyond this knowledge to develop a culture and specific plans that attract, retain, and fully utilize a diverse workforce--there needs to be a step from understanding to engaging and responding (Stoner, 1997). Some suggestions for successfully integrating diversity into corporate

culture are: incorporating diversity into the mission statement; creating diversity action plans; including accountability into business objectives; involving employees from all levels and functions; and devising community involvement and outreach programs (Wheeler, 1995).

All of these diversity initiatives prescribe that managers need to see past the facts and numbers to build receptive cultures. They need to sensitize themselves to the feelings of minorities to understand differences (Bruner, 1997). "By valuing all these dimensions of diversity, we increase the pool of creativity on which our future as a business depends. In this way, we increase our responsiveness to the customers we serve and the communities we inhabit" (Laurie, 1997, p. 231).

At the same time, though, little evidence exists to support these claims that diversity helps the organization's bottom-line. It is much easier to show the potential costs of not being diverse such as "lawsuits based on organizational bias, high turnover, low morale and productivity, additional recruitment and retraining costs, loss of talent to competitors and negative publicity" (Wheeler, 1995, p. 15). "Poor relationships, in other words, can cost an organization a great deal although good relationships may not necessarily make money for the organization. At the same time, good relationships can make money through productive employees, satisfied customers, and supportive donors, stakeholders or legislators" (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, Ehling, 1992, p. 86).

Diversity efforts then aim to help organizations by reducing unnecessary and costly turnover and litigation. For example, it is estimated that it costs between \$12,000 and \$14,000 to recruit a new employee but it costs about \$100,000 to train him or her (Wheeler, 1995).

Lawsuits can be even more costly to organizations. Stanford University was recently ordered to pay \$545,000 to a former researcher when a jury determined that she was fired in retaliation for complaining about sex discrimination at the institution (Workman, 2000). In addition, the U.S. Labor Department is investigating charges that the university has violated affirmative action law in hiring, promoting, and retaining female faculty and researchers (Workman, 2000). If a pattern of discrimination is found, Stanford could lose \$500 million in federal contracts and grants on an annual basis (Workman, 2000).

The federal government agreed to pay a record \$508 million settlement to 1,100 women who were rejected for jobs at the U. S. Information Agency and Voice of America ("Feds to settle sex bias lawsuit for \$508 million," 2000). This settlement is the largest in U. S. history for a sex discrimination case and is nearly three times larger than the largest private sector discrimination case ever settled: the \$176 million settlement reached in Texaco's 1996 racial discrimination case ("Feds to settle sex bias lawsuit for \$508 million," 2000).

Diversity, therefore, not only can help an organization improve client relations, employee morale and motivation, and competitiveness, it also can help the organization save money and the embarrassment of negative publicity. Perhaps, then, measurements for the impact of diversity should not be in dollar figures but rather in organizational change, success, and effectiveness (Wheeler, 1996).

Requisite Variety--a Link among Relationships, Diversity, and Public Relations

Weick (1979) introduced the idea that for an organization to be effective, there must be as much diversity within it as outside it. This diversity then increases the effectiveness of the organization because senior managers are not isolated--they have a better understanding of those publics who are different than themselves (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Ehling, 1992; Dozier et al., 1995).

The variety within provides a basis for building mutually beneficial relationships with diverse peoples and groups outside the organization. Without such requisite variety, senior managers of organizations interact awkwardly with constituents different from themselves. Communication is difficult; misunderstandings are common. Misunderstandings become downright dangerous when they lead to boycotts, lawsuits and labor disputes. (Dozier et al., 1995, p. 151)

Partners in a relationship must recognize their common interests and commit to the focus of the relationship while understanding that in order to learn and enrich their own views, they must give and get opinions from all involved. People must feel something in common and also feel able to let their voices be heard. In being committed to this common ground, all diverse and differing opinions must be heard to allow for tolerance, creativity, and community goals (Culbertson & Cohen, 1997). Public relations efforts must be utilized to remind the organization and its publics of the core values.

All publics must have a voice and power for the relationship to be symmetrical (Culbertson & Cohen, 1997). In order for all publics to have a voice, the organization and those who have relationships with it must hold diversity as a core value. People need to feel as if they are a part of something larger than themselves in order to sacrifice and cooperate for the benefit of the other (Culbertson & Chen, 1997). Public relations should aspire to be the function that allows all voices to be heard because it is charged with

identifying, monitoring, and shaping trends (Kotcher, 1995). Public relations then can be the leader when it comes to diversity opportunities.

“Public relations practitioners should be in the forefront on diversity issues including: advising management, helping to create strategies to develop greater diversity, communicating with a culturally diverse workforce and fostering understanding among various worker groups” (Fry, 1992, p. 12). If public relations ignores the importance of diversity, “...we could miss one of the most significant business opportunities we have seen in years” (Kotcher, 1995, p. 6). Perhaps the best summation of this agenda is from Strenski (1994):

Diversity will not disappear. CEOs are searching for answers. They have turned to legal counsel in the past when public relations proved wanting and they could look elsewhere to help manage diversity. If public relations practitioners fail to step up to the plate, human resources directors or cultural affairs officers certainly will, and, public relations will, once again, lose management respect. (p. 36)

Hon and Brunner (in press) recently explored the link between diversity management and public relations. Their research and analysis identify a continuum that reflects stages of diversity's integration at organizations and the implications of these stages for public relations. The lowest level of this continuum is “No commitment to diversity,” which is when organizations believe diversity is a non-issue for both the organization and public relations in general. The next step is “Weak commitment to diversity.” Organizations that fit in this category view diversity as meeting legal requirements only. “Diversity awareness” is the next stage. These organizations know the strategic value that diversity management has for both the organization and public relations, but often their diversity efforts end up being little more than lip service or tokenism. The highest level of the continuum is “Diversity as organizational culture.”

This stage exists in organizations that show a deep commitment to diversity. Such organizations incorporate diversity practices into daily activities so much so that their commitment to these policies becomes second nature.

In addition, Hon and Brunner (in press) suggest that a fifth level, "Diversity as social responsibility" should be added to the continuum. In this stage, organizations would view diversity as a means to build long-term symmetrical relationships between organizations and publics because doing so is socially responsible, irrespective of bottom-line concern. Such a mindset then would emphasize public relations' obligation to representing both the organization and its publics and attention to diversity would help public relations to better fulfill this role.

Diversity in the State University System of Florida

In 1998 alone, diversity has come up several times on the University of Florida campus. In January, the media reported that at a private party former President Lombardi called the newly appointed, and first African-American, Chancellor of the State University System an "oreo" (Martin, 1998, p. 1A). Following this incident, there was much discussion about the president's commitment to diversity and minority students. Some argued that his record demonstrated he had been proactive about diversity, but his remark was difficult to swallow (Martin, 1998).

Despite Lombardi's efforts, the University of Florida continues to have the least diverse faculty and administration in the state system (Martin, 1998). When called on this, the Lombardi administration defended itself by stating that there is fierce nationwide competition among top institutions for qualified minority candidates and that the university's higher standards are to blame for this situation (Martin, 1998). However, not

everyone believes this to be true. State Representative Cynthia Chestnut says, "I don't think we can rely on the statement we can't find qualified candidates when the other State University System schools have found them. I think the standards are high for all Florida institutions" (Martin, 1998, p. 4A).

Similarly, other Florida campuses also have been examining diversity issues. University of Miami president, Dr. Edward Foote III, says, "Diversity is not a passing issue" ("Diversity on campus found to be beneficial, poll shows," 1998, p. 6B). President Eduardo Padron of Miami-Dade/Community College adds, "We're moving more and more into a global society" and states students need to be prepared to deal with different people and cultures ("Diversity on campus found to be beneficial, poll shows," 1998, p. 6B).

On November 9, 1999, Florida Governor Jeb Bush ordered an end to racial and ethnic preferences in public contracting and a phasing out of similar policies used in the college admissions process (Padilla & Berry, 1999). Bush claimed that affirmative action policies are unfair, ineffective, and suggested that race-neutral efforts are a better way to help disadvantaged students (Marshall, 1999). Bush calls his race-neutral initiatives "One Florida" (Marshall, 1999, p. 1A). "The solution to the problem is not to discriminate against another group of people," Bush said. "The solution to the problem is, if there are forms of bigotry, to wipe them out" (quoted in Marshall, 1999, p. 1A).

However, not everyone is sure that Bush's plan is a positive step for higher education. University of Florida Interim President Charles Young strongly opposed the anti-affirmative action measures taken at his former school, the University of California, Los Angeles, noting the "negative and immediate" impact the measures made (Miller &

Geller, 1999, p. 8A). Young is “not convinced” Bush’s One Florida plan will work in the University of Florida’s best interest (Miller & Geller, 1999, p. 8A). As Young argued:

The makeup of the university has intrinsic as well as extrinsic value. Any student who graduates with a degree in teaching is a better teacher by having studied in a diverse community than having studied in an all-white community. Any doctor who graduates is better off having had colleagues who are Hispanic and African-American and so forth. (quoted in Miller & Geller, 1999, p. 8A)

Students at the University of Florida also voiced their concerns about the One Florida plan. Brent Gordon, student body president, was concerned about the racial inequities that could result from Bush’s Talented 20 Percent Plan (Avery, 1999). The plan guarantees the top 20 percent of every high school class admission to a state university. Gordon believes Bush’s plan could either reverse the current trend toward greater diversity in the state’s universities or it could lower the University of Florida’s academic standards (Avery, 1999). Student Body Vice President, Jocelyn Moore, said One Florida would create “ghetto schools” where minority students who do not meet the admission requirements of the University of Florida would be sent (Avery, 1999, p. 1A). Moore further raised issue with the fact that the general public was not allowed a vote on the measure: “We’re talking about educating people and we’re not involving the people we’re trying to educate at all” (Avery, 1999, p. 1A).

Students and Florida citizens continued to voice their concerns about the plan by staging public hearings throughout the state in February (Marshall, 2000). Although speeches were peaceful, they reflected a growing distrust of Bush and his plan (Marshall,

2000). “He wants us to trust him,” Tallahassee minister Elijah La Count said. “How can we trust someone who doesn’t even care enough to be here” ¹(Marshall, 200, p. 1A).

Despite the public’s outcries for more time to consider the proposed plan, the State University System’s Board of Regents passed One Florida in a 12-0 vote February 17, 2000 (Avery & Allen, 2000). Regent Jon Moyle said “The Regents’ decision to implement One Florida will allow our state to move forward to a system of higher education that embraces diversity and fundamental fairness for all” (Avery & Allen, 2000, p. 1). And Regent Steven Uhlfelder asked, “If we drop a rank or two in diversity, what is wrong with that?” (Avery & Allen, 2000, p. 10).

Research Questions

These recent events suggest that the University of Florida is a compelling setting to examine public relationships and to what degree an organization’s commitment to diversity affects those relationships. To do so, the following research questions are investigated:²

- 1.) What are students’ perceptions of their relationship with the university?
- 2.) What are students’ perceptions of the university’s commitment to diversity?
- 3.) Are students’ perceptions about relationships and the university’s commitment to diversity related?
- 4.) Is students’ ethnicity related to their perceptions of relationships?

¹ This reference refers to Bush’s unwillingness to attend public hearings or meet with citizens who questioned his initiative.

² Formal hypotheses are not posed, given the dearth of previous theoretical research in public relations on the study’s main variables.

- 5.) Is students' ethnicity related to their perceptions of the university's commitment to diversity?
- 6.) How do administrators describe students' relationships with the university?
- 7.) Do administrators think that the university's level of commitment to diversity affects students' relationships with the university?

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study measures perceptions of relationships between students and their academic institution from the perspective of students and administrators. This study takes a two-pronged approach: a quantitative survey of students and an open-ended survey of selected top decision makers.

By developing and using sophisticated measurement tools that get at the essence of what public relations is about--relationships--this research adds to the body of knowledge in public relations. In particular, it elaborates and further informs the theory and literature that exists on public relations relationships. In addition, this study is one of the first to examine both sides of public relationships by exploring the perspective of publics and the organization's administrators.

This study is also the first to examine the link between relationships and diversity. This innovative approach follows the growing trend of evaluating public relations in the context of relationship management but adds to it a diversity component.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research aims to find patterns of regularity in social life that can be generalized from a representative sample to a larger population. The goal is valid and reliable measurement of theoretical concepts--positivism is the general overview of quantitative research (Blumer, 1969). Positivists build on Kuhn's (1970) The Structure

of Scientific Revolutions and believe that an observable reality exists and that this “reality” can be explained and predicted by objective research (Blumer, 1969).

Quantitative researchers fit a theory to their study, test assumptions with predetermined measurements, carefully select samples to allow for generalizability, and attempt to eliminate researcher bias. Their main goals are to acquire knowledge that is reliable (with repeated attempts, the same results would be found), valid (the research is truly measuring what it claims to be) and, most importantly, generalizable.

Quantification, or assigning numeric values to data, make findings more explicit, easier to summarize, and opens the data to statistical analyses (Babbie, 1998).

Quantitative methods then are appropriately used when 1.) numerical measurement can offer a useful description of the phenomena being studied, 2.) the researcher wishes to make descriptive generalizations about the measures, and 3.) the researcher wants to calculate the probability that relationships found in the data did not occur by chance (Williams, 1992).

Survey

Survey research is the most frequently used research method in public relations (Pavlik, 1987). A content analysis done by Pavlik and Summerall's (1986) found that about 67 percent of the published studies in public relations journals used the survey method. In addition, survey research is probably the most used method in the social sciences because it can attain data about a population that is too large to observe (Babbie, 1998).

Surveys are popular research methods because they have many advantages. For example, surveys are versatile in that they enable statistical analysis of the data, they can be cost-efficient, and they can be administered in various ways (Babbie, 1998).

There are, however, drawbacks to survey research as well. Since standardization drops representation to the least common denominator, the researcher misses the opportunity to investigate the particular attitudes and experiences that shape respondents' answers; and, surveys cannot evaluate the context of the participants' lives (Babbie, 1998).

In its simplest form, a survey is a set of questions designed to elicit information from a group of individuals (Pavlik, 1987). There are two basic types of surveys: descriptive and analytical. Descriptive surveys develop a picture of a current situation or condition (Pavlik, 1987). For example, a descriptive survey might ask questions like: "How many students are satisfied with the education they are receiving?" or "What percentage of students can identify their institution's president?." Such questioning can offer insight into what different segments of a population know, remember, or think. But descriptive queries alone cannot offer much of an explanation for why or how these people came up with the responses they did.

In contrast, analytical surveys can ask the questions that descriptive surveys cannot. Analytical surveys have the purpose of both describing and explaining why a current situation or condition exists (Pavlik, 1987). They typically involve the statistical testing of hypotheses and research questions (Pavlik, 1987). Some examples of analytical questions are: "Are perceptions about student/university relationships related to perceptions about a university's commitment to diversity?" and "Do minority students

perceive their relationships with a university to be more positive if they believe that the university is committed to diversity?."

The first issue that researchers face when designing a survey is measurement or assigning numbers to the object of study (Pavlik, 1987). Measurement's primary concerns are validity and reliability. Validity means "Does the measurement instrument--the questionnaire--actually measure what it is supposed to?" (Pavlik, 1987, p. 34). For example, if a survey is about student attitudes toward grades, the researcher's concern would be whether the questions actually measured students' feeling about their institution's grading policy. Reliability is the consistency of measure (Pavlik, 1987). A question on a student attitude survey would be considered reliable if it produced consistent results each time it was used.

Sampling is another concern for survey researchers. Sampling begins with defining the population from which information will be drawn. Then a subset of individuals is selected and if appropriate, generalizations about them are made to a broader population (Pavlik, 1987). To make generalizations and valid inferences, the sample must accurately represent the population from which it is drawn (Austin & Pinkleton, in press). However, obtaining a sample that is truly representative of the greater population can be difficult because it requires that all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected (Pavlik, 1987).

There are two general approaches to obtaining a sample: nonprobability and probability. Nonprobability sampling is informal and is generally based on convenience or availability (Pavlik, 1987). Because of this, it lacks external validity and the findings of a nonprobability sample may not generalize to the rest of the population.

Even though a nonprobability sample may be perfectly representative of a population, investigators cannot scientifically demonstrate its level of representativeness. For this reason, the results of research that use nonprobability samples are low in generalizability, also known as external validity. (Austin & Pinkleton, in press)

Probability sampling is more scientific and allows the researcher to make statistical inferences about the sample to the population since all members of the population have a "known chance of being selected" (Pavlik, 1987, p. 36, Austin & Pinkleton, in press). Because of this, the margin of error (i.e., accuracy of sample estimates) can be computed.

Study Procedures

Researchers at the University of Maryland have developed a questionnaire that measures an organization-public relationship. The scales used are based on the six relationship indicators (trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, communal relationships, and exchange relationships) that were identified by J. Grunig and Huang.

A pilot study using the instrument was conducted by J. Grunig and Huang (summarized in Hon and J. Grunig, 1999) to see how respondents perceived their relationships with five well-known organizations. J. Grunig and Huang found that their original questionnaire containing 52 questions about the six indicators was too long and most respondents did not complete the entire questionnaire. They then developed a shortened version of the instrument, which was adapted for this study (see Appendix A).

Reliability for both the full and reduced scales was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. With the exception of the items measuring exchange relationships (Alpha of .70),

the other indicators all produced Alphas between .80 and .90 when looking at both the full and reduced item scales.³

To help avoid response set, the relationship items were presented in random order and several questions were written as reverse statements. An index measuring students' perceptions of the university's commitment to diversity also was added. All of the relationship and diversity items used a seven-point Likert scale ranging from very strongly agree to very strongly disagree. Demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire included gender, whether or not the student was first in his or her family to attend college, year in school, and ethnicity.

Pre-test

A pre-test with 37 University of Florida students was conducted to help identify whether there were any problems with questionnaire items or survey instructions. This pre-test used a self-administered questionnaire with students enrolled in PUR 4801, Public Relations Cases, Strategies and Tactics. Subjects included both males and females ranging in age from 20 to 27. Students were not offered an incentive for participation in the survey.

The pre-test results suggested that students were willing to respond to questions about their relationship with the university, and their responses seemed to indicate that the six outcomes measured in the survey are relevant to students. The original wording of two questions, "Compared to other universities, I value my relationship with the University of Florida more" and "The University of Florida does not especially enjoy

³ Although there is not one recognized Alpha level for acceptable reliability, a general suggestion is that an Alpha between .70 and .90 is sufficient (Broom & Dozier, 1990).

giving other organizations and groups aid” was confusing to students. So, both of these items were reworded.

The pre-test showed that it was difficult to determine if students felt neutral about a question or if they just had no opinion at all. The researcher then decided to substitute “neutral” for “not applicable” as the mid-point of the scale. “Not applicable” was moved to the last category of the scale for those wanting to express no opinion.

Students also suggested that a clearer explanation about how to answer some of the questions was needed. So, instructions were added at the top of the questionnaire that explicitly asked respondents to answer the questions thinking about the university as a whole and not one segment such as an academic department, college, or an administrative division such as parking enforcement. To avoid confusion about the statement, “like me,” which was present in several items, participants were asked to answer these questions in relation to their own personal perceptions of their gender and ethnicity (as opposed to how students believe others might perceive them).

A second pre-test was conducted to determine the likelihood that students would respond to an unsolicited email survey. It was hoped that email addresses would serve as the sampling frame from which a probability sample of the university’s student body could be drawn. Subjects were sent an email asking them to participate in a survey about students’ relationships with the University of Florida. This email included a brief explanation of the study, a consent form, and a web address at which they could find the questionnaire.

Fifty-four students were randomly selected from the university's phone book (the 25th student on each page) and were emailed the survey. Six participants responded to the email producing a response rate of 11 percent.

Main Survey

An email survey alone was considered first for this study. However, after the email pre-test, the researcher discovered that the university did not have a policy concerning the use of email as a research vehicle. The university considers all unsolicited emails to be "spamming," which is punishable by both university policy and U. S. laws. This problem, as well as the low response rate of the second pre-test, suggested that another means of obtaining a random sample of students was necessary. The researcher looked into obtaining a random sample of all students' addresses so that a mail survey could be conducted. However, obtaining such a sample proved to be cost prohibitive. When the researcher asked the Registrar and the Office of Student Affairs if a list of students who lived on campus was available, the response was that no such list exists. The researcher then inquired as to whether or not a list of students based on ethnicity was available but again, there was no such list.

The researcher then secured cooperation from the Division of Housing, which provided a systematic random sample of 540 students living at four dorms on the University of Florida campus. These dorms were selected because they had neither GPA requirements nor other stipulations for occupancy and they also had large minority populations (at least 20 percent).⁴ To produce the sample, the Director of Housing

⁴ Current minority enrollment at the University of Florida is approximately 20 percent.

selected every fifth student on the master list for Rawlings and Jennings Hall and every fourth student on the master list for Broward and Hume Hall.

The survey was conducted in two ways. Half the study population or 135 students living in Rawlings Hall and 135 living in Jennings Hall received a notice in the mail asking them to visit a website where the survey was posted. The other half of the study population of 135 students living in Broward and 135 students living in Hume Hall received a survey in the mail and were asked to complete it and return it to their Resident Assistant. Questionnaires and website notices were distributed the week of April 10, 2000. The RAs then brought the returned questionnaires to the Division of Housing where they were collected by the researcher during the weeks of April 24 and May 1, 2000.

Two hundred forty-six students participated in the survey. The response rates were 29 percent ($N=79$) for the on-line survey and 68 percent ($N=167$) for the paper survey (overall 46 percent).

However, the systematic random sampling technique did not produce enough responses from minorities, so convenience sampling then was employed. Questionnaires were distributed as a census to two additional dormitories--one having GPA requirements, the other being similar in make-up to the original sample. A total of 427 questionnaires were distributed to the dorms and 43 completed ones were returned to the researcher. The researcher then distributed questionnaires to five classes in the College of Journalism and Communications, as well as at a fire drill at the Education Library, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and bus stops on- and off-campus the week of July 3, 2000. Three hundred and twenty-seven questionnaires were completed by students in classes, at

the fire drill, the fraternity, and bus stops. Although attempts were made to locate participants via the Institutes of Black and Hispanic/Latino Culture and the Minority Scholarship Program and questionnaires were left with these organization's main offices, no responses were received. This could be due to the timing of the survey. In total, 616 completed responses were obtained by the researcher using both probability and non-probability techniques.

Survey of Administrators

An open-ended survey was conducted face-to-face with nine people identified as chief decision makers at the university (see Appendix B). An additional eight members of the current and former administration also were asked to be interviewed. These individuals either declined the offer or did not respond to the inquiry. The purpose of this step was to determine what the university's administration believes students think about their relationship with the university and whether the university's commitment to diversity might affect those relationships. These administrators included members of the University of Florida's top administration, vice presidents, deans, and academic and admissions advisers and represent the areas of Academic Advising, Student Affairs, Admissions, Public Relations and the Provost's Office. The nine participants who participated in the open-ended survey included four men and five women; five interviewees are Caucasian, three African American, and one Hispanic.

These officials were chosen because of the likelihood that they have or have had a major impact on students' perceptions of their relationship with the university. Although this type of survey method was more time consuming, it was chosen because it allowed

the researcher to probe for more in-depth information than other survey methods permit (Orlich, 1978). In addition, because the number of interviewees was small, asking open-ended questions in person was feasible.

Interviews took place in the interviewees' campus offices. On average, the interviews lasted 30 minutes and all were audio-recorded. The tapes were transcribed verbatim within a day of each interview. Transcripts were reviewed by the researcher and coded for major themes (see Appendix C). A second independent coder (the committee chair) also reviewed the transcripts to help refine and expand the categories. It was determined that the results from the interviews would be presented most meaningfully as major themes with supporting quotations and paraphrases. Because of the richness of the data, quantitative coding of the interviews was not used.⁵

⁵ Quantitative coding of open-ended survey responses refers to developing close-ended categories, labeling data, and counting the frequency with which the data correspond to categories (Babbie, 1998).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter will describe the demographic make-up of the survey participants, explain the relevant indices used for data analysis, and also reveal the relevant findings of the survey. Research questions were answered using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson's correlation coefficient, and coding and interpreting the responses to the open-ended survey.

Study participants

Approximately 65 percent (N=398) of the participants are female and 35 percent (N=216) are male (see Table 1). The university's student body is approximately 50 percent female. Most of the students (82.5 percent; N=508) are not the first in their family to attend college (see Table 2). Approximately 26.6 percent (N=164) of the respondents are freshman, 22.1 percent (N=136) are sophomores, 26.9 percent (N=166) are juniors and 24.4 percent (N=150) are seniors (see Table 3). Although the majority of the respondents are Caucasian (63%, N=388), other ethnic groups are represented at levels that are equal to or higher than the actual make-up of the university campus. Approximately 12 percent (N=76) identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino, 11.7 percent (N=72) as African-American/Black, 6 percent (N=37) as Asian, 4.1 percent (N=25) as Biracial/Multiracial, 0.8 percent (N=5) as Native American/American Indian, 1.5 percent (N=9) as Pacific Islander, and 0.5 percent (N=3) as "other" (see Table 4). The student

population of the university is 68.5% Caucasian, 8.9% Hispanic, 6.1 percent African American, 5.8% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 3.2% Native American.

Table 1: Gender Representation

Gender	N	Percentage
Female	398	64.6
Male	216	35.1

2 missing cases

Table 2: First in Family to Attend College

First in Family	N	Percentage
Yes	106	17.2
No	508	82.5

2 missing cases

Table 3: Year in School

Year	N	Percentage
Freshman	164	26.6
Sophomore	136	22.1
Junior	166	26.9
Senior	150	24.4

Table 4: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	N	Percentage
African American/Black	72	11.7
Asian	37	6.0
Biracial/Multiracial	25	4.1
Caucasian	388	63.0
Hispanic/Latino	76	12.3
Native American Indian	5	0.8
Pacific Islander	9	1.5
Other	3	0.5

1 missing case

R1: What are Students' Perceptions of their Relationship with the University?

The answer to this research question relies on the participants' responses to questions about trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, exchange relationships, and communal relationships. In addition to examining responses to individual items, a separate index for the trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship, communal relationship, and diversity was calculated by using the compute function in SPSS. The new composite variables then were tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Each index registered the following alphas: trust .73, control mutuality .55, satisfaction .81, commitment .71, exchange relationship .54, communal relationship .66, and diversity .63. Further reliability analysis was conducted to determine if the alpha scores for any of the indices could be improved if an individual

item were deleted. This analysis revealed that the control mutuality alpha would be .68 if the question, “I feel that students like me must stand-up for themselves to be treated fairly by UF,” were removed. Also, the alpha for the communal relationship scale would be .68 with the removal of the item, “UF does not especially enjoy giving help to other organizations and groups.” The diversity index’s alpha would be .68 with the removal of the question, “Students like me do not matter to UF.” Therefore, the indices were reconfigured with these items removed. Item deletion did not improve the alpha scores for any of the other indices.

Table 5 shows that average score for the trust index is 4.71 and Table 6 shows that means for the six trust items ranged from 4.24 to 5.16. While the means for the composite trust index and several of the individual trust items may appear to hover around the neutral point, they are significantly different from the neutral point. Using one-sample t-tests where four was the test value, all $t_s > 4.7$, all $p_s < .001$ (see Tables 7 and 8). These findings also indicate that the students do agree that the university treats students fairly and that it has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Trust Index

Trust	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.71	.77

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Trust Questions

Trust	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	5.07	1.19
Q2	4.24	1.24
Q3	4.44	1.29
Q4	4.98	1.17
Q5	5.16	1.04
Q6	4.39	1.22

Q1=UF treats students like me fairly.

Q2=Whenever UF makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about students like me.

Q3=UF can be relied on to keep its promises.

Q4=I feel very confident about UF's ability to achieve its mission.

Q5=UF has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

Q6=I believe that UF takes opinions of students like me into account when making decisions.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 7: One-Sample t-test for Trust Index

Trust	t-statistic	Significance
	22.05	p<.001

Table 8: One-Sample t-test for Trust Items

Trust	t-statistic	Significance
Q1	21.66	p<.001
Q2	4.70	p<.001
Q3	8.12	p<.001
Q4	19.90	p<.001
Q5	26.60	p<.001
Q6	7.60	p<.001

Q1=UF treats students like me fairly.

Q2=Whenever UF makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about students like me.

Q3=UF can be relied on to keep its promises.

Q4=I feel very confident about UF's ability to achieve its mission.

Q5=UF has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

Q6=I believe that UF takes opinions of students like me into account when making decisions.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Tables 9 and 10 show that the means for the composite control mutuality index and the individual control mutuality items are similar and concentrate around the neutral point. However, they are significantly different than the neutral point; using one-sample t-tests where four was the test value, all t s > 2.77 , all p s $< .006$ (see Tables 11 and 12). In addition, Table 10 shows that on average respondents disagreed with the item stating that students have to stand-up for themselves to be treated fairly by the University of Florida.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Control Mutuality Index

Control Mutuality	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.43	.90

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics for Control Mutuality Items

Control Mutuality	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	4.14	1.24
Q2	4.62	1.06
Q3	4.53	1.13
Q4*	3.44	1.45

Q1=UF really listens to what students like me have to say.

Q2= UF believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.

Q3= UF and students like me are attentive to what each other say.

Q4= I feel that students like me must stand-up for themselves to be treated fairly by UF.

* REVERSE

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 11: One-Sample t-test for Control Mutuality Index

Control Mutuality	t-statistic	Significance
	11.43	$p < .001$

Table 12: One-Sample t-test for Control Mutuality Items

Trust	t-statistic	Significance
Q1	2.77	p<.006
Q2	13.88	p<.001
Q3	11.15	p<.001
Q4*	9.27	p<.001

Q1=UF really listens to what students like me have to say.

Q2= UF believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.

Q3= UF and students like me are attentive to what each other say.

Q4= I feel that students like me must stand-up for themselves to be treated fairly by UF.

* REVERSE

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Tables 13 and 14 indicate that the means for the satisfaction index and most of the individual satisfaction items cluster around the neutral point. However, one-sample t-tests where four was the test value show that they are actually significantly different than the neutral point, all ts > 14.86, all ps < .001 (see Tables 15 and 16). The mean for Question 4 also shows that on average, students are happy with the University of Florida.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Index

Satisfaction	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.92	.88

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Items

Satisfaction	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	4.72	1.13
Q2	4.79	1.25
Q3	4.77	1.24
Q4	5.40	1.25
Q5	4.89	1.06

Q1=Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship UF has established with students like me.

Q2=Most students like me are happy in their interactions with UF.

Q3=Students like me are very important to UF.

Q4=I am happy with UF.

Q5=Both UF and students like me benefit from their relationship.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 15: One-Sample t-test for Satisfaction Index

Satisfaction	t-statistic	Significance
	24.79	p<.001

Table 16: One-Sample t-test for Satisfaction Items

Satisfaction	t-statistic	Significance
Q1	15.26	p<.001
Q2	15.23	p<.001
Q3	14.86	p<.001
Q4	26.77	p<.001
Q5	20.17	p<.001

Q1=Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship UF has established with students like me.

Q2=Most students like me are happy in their interactions with UF.

Q3=Students like me are very important to UF.

Q4=I am happy with UF.

Q5=Both UF and students like me benefit from their relationship.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Tables 17 and 18 show that the means for the commitment index and the individual commitment items hover around the neutral point. However, one-sample t-tests using four as the test value indicate that they means are significantly different than the neutral point, all $t_s > 11.65$, all $p_s < .001$ (see Tables 19 and 20).

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics for Commitment Index

Commitment	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.68	.97

Table 18: Descriptive Statistics for Commitment Items

Commitment	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	4.65	1.30
Q2	4.82	1.67
Q3	4.59	1.20
Q4	4.66	1.25

Q1=I can see that UF wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.

Q2=Compared to other universities, I value my relationship with UF more.

Q3=I feel that UF is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.

Q4=There is a long-lasting bond between UF and students like me.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 19: One-Sample t-test for Commitment Index

Commitment	t-statistic	Significance
	16.72	$P < .001$

Table 20: One-Sample t-test for Commitment Items

Commitment	t-statistic	Significance
Q1	11.96	P<.001
Q2	11.74	P<.001
Q3	11.65	P<.001
Q4	12.64	P<.001

Q1=I can see that UF wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.

Q2=Compared to other universities, I value my relationship with UF more.

Q3=I feel that UF is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.

Q4=There is a long-lasting bond between UF and students like me.

Tables 21 and 22 indicate that the means for the exchange relationship index and most of the exchange relationship items fall around the neutral point. However, one-sample t-tests where four was the test value show that all were significantly different than the neutral point except exchange relationship Question 4--Whenever UF gives or offers something to students like me, it generally expects something in return. Tables 23 and 24 show all other ts > 2.34, all other ps < .001. The mean for Question 2 also suggests that in general students agree that the university takes care of students, such as athletes, national merit scholars, etc., who benefit the institution.

Table 21: Descriptive Statistics for Exchange Relationship Index

Exchange Relationship	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.42	.94

Table 22: Descriptive Statistics for Exchange Relationship Items

Exchange Relationship	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1	4.26	1.66
Q2	5.27	1.28
Q3	4.14	1.45
Q4	4.05	1.32

Q1=UF will make exception for students like me when it knows that it will gain something.

Q2=UF takes care of students who are likely to benefit it.

Q3=Even though students like me have had a relationship with UF for a long time, it still expects something in return whenever it does us a favor.

Q4=Whenever UF gives or offers something to students like me, it generally expects something in return.

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 23: One-Sample t-test for Exchange Relationship Index

Exchange Relationship	t-statistic	Significance
	10.74	P<.001

Table 24: One-Sample t-test for Exchange Relationship Items

Exchange Relationship	t-statistic	Significance
Q1	3.69	P<.001
Q2	23.63	P<.001
Q3	2.34	P<.001
Q4	0.92	p =.36

Q1=UF will make exception for students like me when it knows that it will gain something.

Q2=UF takes care of students who are likely to benefit it.

Q3=Even though students like me have had a relationship with UF for a long time, it still expects something in return whenever it does us a favor.

Q4=Whenever UF gives or offers something to students like me, it generally expects something in return.

Tables 25 and 26 show that the means for the communal relationship index and the individual communal relationship items cluster around the neutral response.

However, they are significantly different than the neutral point. Using one-sample t-tests where four was the test value, all $t_s > 3.00$, all $p_s < .003$ (see Tables 27 and 28).

Table 25: Descriptive Statistics for Communal Relationship Index

Communal Relationship	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.34	1.01

Table 26: Descriptive Statistics for Communal Relationship Items

Communal Relationship	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1*	4.16	1.31
Q2	4.45	1.16
Q3*	4.79	1.42
Q4*	4.39	1.39

Q1= I think UF succeeds with little consideration of students like me.

Q2=UF is very concerned about the welfare of students like me.

Q3=UF does not especially enjoy giving help to other organizations and groups.

Q4=UF has a tendency to ignore students like me.

*REVERSE

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 27: One-Sample t-test for Communal Relationship Index

Communal Relationship	t-statistic	Significance
	7.96	$p < .001$

Table 28: One-Sample t-test for Communal Relationship Items

Communal Relationship	t-statistic	Significance
Q1*	3.00	p<.003
Q2	9.27	p<.001
Q3*	13.21	p<.001
Q4*	6.70	p<.001

Q1=I think UF succeeds with little consideration of students like me.

Q2=UF is very concerned about the welfare of students like me.

Q3=UF does not especially enjoy giving help to other organizations and groups.

Q4=UF has a tendency to ignore students like me.

*REVERSE

Means were computed to examine students' responses to the indices when looking at gender, first in family to attend college, and year in school (See Tables, 29, 30, and 31).

Table 29: Mean Values for Relationship Indices by Gender

Gender	Trust	Control Mutuality	Satisfaction	Commitment	Exchange Relationship	Communal Relationship
Male						
Mean	4.71	4.42	4.96	4.71	4.42	4.31
Std. Dev.	0.77	0.96	0.82	0.96	0.91	0.97
Female						
Mean	4.71	4.44	4.89	4.67	4.42	4.35
Std. Dev.	0.77	0.87	0.92	0.98	0.96	1.03

Table 30: Mean Values for Relationship Indices and First in Family to Attend College

FFAC	Trust	Control Mutuality	Satisfaction	Commitment	Exchange Relationship	Communal Relationship
Yes						
Mean	4.68	4.36	4.82	4.61	4.34	4.24
Std. Dev.	0.78	1.00	0.91	1.06	0.96	1.07
No						
Mean	4.72	4.45	4.94	4.70	4.44	4.36
Std. Dev.	0.77	0.88	0.88	0.95	0.94	0.99

Table 31: Mean Values for Relationship Indices and Year in School

Year	Trust	Control Mutuality	Satisfaction	Commitment	Exchange Relationship	Communal Relationship
Freshman						
Mean	4.73	4.42	4.91	4.65	4.38	4.36
Std. Dev.	0.82	0.94	0.95	1.02	0.99	1.03
Sophomore						
Mean	4.70	4.49	4.93	4.65	4.37	4.37
Std. Dev.	0.73	0.85	0.82	0.87	0.92	0.90
Junior						
Mean	4.73	4.48	4.93	4.78	4.37	4.29
Std. Dev.	0.72	0.85	0.87	0.87	0.94	1.05
Senior						
Mean	4.69	4.35	4.89	4.63	4.58	4.32
Std. Dev.	0.82	0.96	0.88	1.10	0.90	1.04

ANOVAs were performed using the composite relationship variables as dependent variables and gender, first in family to attend college, and year in school as independent variables. This analysis shows no statistically significant differences (see Tables 32, 33, and 34). For this reason, no post-hoc comparisons were made.

Table 32: ANOVA for Gender and Relationship Variables

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Trust	.000	.993
Control Mutuality	.123	.726
Satisfaction	.085	.771
Commitment	.350	.554
Exchange Relationship	.100	.752
Communal Relationship	.603	.438

Table 33: ANOVA for First in Family to Attend College and Relationship Variables

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Trust	.022	.883
Control Mutuality	1.215	.271
Satisfaction	.192	.661
Commitment	.342	.559
Exchange Relationship	.224	.636
Communal Relationship	.157	.692

Table 34: ANOVA for Year in School and Relationship Variables

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Trust	.212	.888
Control Mutuality	1.720	.162
Satisfaction	.798	.496
Commitment	.156	.926
Exchange Relationship	.349	.790
Communal Relationship	.150	.929

R2: What are Students' Perceptions of the University's Commitment to Diversity?

The answer to this research question relies on the participants' responses to questions about diversity on campus. The average score for the diversity index is 4.73. While the means for the composite diversity index (Table 35) and several of the

individual diversity items (Table 36) may appear to hover around the neutral point, they are significantly different from the neutral point. Using one-sample t-tests where four was the test value, all t s > -4.37 , all p s $< .001$ (see Tables 37 and 38).

Table 35: Descriptive Statistics for Diversity Index

Diversity	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.73	.77

Table 36: Descriptive Statistics for Diversity Items

Diversity	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q1*	4.96	1.44
Q2	5.42	1.17
Q3	5.16	1.06
Q4	5.13	1.32
Q5	4.69	1.13
Q6*	3.71	1.62
Q7	4.47	1.37
Q8*	4.53	1.41

Q1=Students like me do not matter to UF.

Q2=UF believes that there is a value in having students from different backgrounds and cultures attend the institution.

Q3=Students like me are respected in class at UF.

Q4=Diversity among students is a basic part of the culture of UF.

Q5=UF believes that having a diverse environment is a way to build long-term relationships with students like me.

Q6= UF appears to have many students of different ethnicities but it does not "feel diverse" because students do not mix.

Q7=UF is working to correct the underrepresentation of minority students.

Q8=UF lacks a deep commitment to bringing students from different cultures and backgrounds to the university.

*REVERSE

(1=VSD, 4=Neutral, 7=VSA)

Table 37: One-Sample t-test for Diversity Index

Diversity	t-statistic	Significance
	22.65	p<.001

Table 38: One-Sample t-test for Diversity Items

Diversity	t-statistic	Significance
Q1*	15.97	p<.001
Q2	28.95	p<.001
Q3	26.07	p<.001
Q4	20.37	p<.001
Q5	14.58	p<.001
Q6*	-4.37	p<.001
Q7	8.16	p<.001
Q8*	8.96	p<.001

Q1=Students like me do not matter to UF.

Q2=UF believes that there is a value in having students from different backgrounds and cultures attend the institution.

Q3=Students like me are respected in class at UF.

Q4=Diversity among students is a basic part of the culture of UF.

Q5=UF believes that having a diverse environment is a way to build long-term relationships with students like me.

Q6= UF appears to have many students of different ethnicities but it does not "feel diverse" because students do not mix.

Q7=UF is working to correct the under-representation of minority students.

Q8=UF lacks a deep commitment to bringing students from different cultures and backgrounds to the university.

*REVERSE

Means were computed to examine students' responses to the diversity index when looking at gender, first in family to attend college, and year in school (See Tables, 39, 40, and 41).

Table 39: Mean Values for Diversity Index by Gender

Gender	Diversity
Male	
Mean	4.75
Standard Deviation	0.74
Female	
Mean	4.72
Standard Deviation	0.79

Table 40: Mean Values for Diversity Index by First in Family to Attend College

First in Family to Attend College	Diversity
Yes	
Mean	4.69
Standard Deviation	0.82
No	
Mean	4.74
Standard Deviation	0.76

Table 41: Mean Values for Diversity Index by Year in School

Year in School	Diversity
Freshman	
Mean	4.74
Standard Deviation	0.81
Sophomore	
Mean	4.72
Standard Deviation	0.79
Junior	
Mean	4.76
Standard Deviation	0.72
Senior	
Mean	4.68
Standard Deviation	0.76

ANOVAs were performed using the composite diversity variable as the dependent variable and gender, first in family to attend college, and year in school as independent

variables. This analysis shows no statistically significant differences (See Tables 42, 43, and 44). For this reason, no post-hoc comparisons were made.

Table 42: ANOVA for Gender and Diversity Index

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Diversity	.136	.713

Table 43: ANOVA for First in Family to Attend College and Diversity Index

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Diversity	.038	.846

Table 44: ANOVA for Year in School and Diversity Index

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Diversity	.241	.867

R3: Are Students' Perceptions about Relationships and the University's Commitment to Diversity Related?

To answer this research question, correlation coefficients were computed between the composite diversity variable and the composite relationship variables. A significant, positive correlation was found between diversity and every relationship outcome except exchange relationship (diversity and trust ($r = .536, p < .01$), diversity and control mutuality ($r = .429, p < .01$), diversity and satisfaction ($r = .542, p < .01$), diversity and commitment ($r = .494, p < .01$), and diversity and communal relationship ($r = .409, p < .01$)) (See Table 45). The more positive students are about trust, control mutuality,

satisfaction, commitment, and communal relationships the more positive they are about the university's efforts to foster diversity on campus.

Table 45: Correlations of Diversity and Other Outcome Factors

Outcome Factor	r	Significance
Trust	.536	p<.001
Control Mutuality	.429	p<.001
Satisfaction	.542	p<.001
Commitment	.494	p<.001
Exchange	.040	.342
Communal	.409	p<.001

R4: Is Students' Ethnicity Related to their Perceptions of Relationships?

To explore this question, a dichotomous variable was created by classifying students as minority or non-minority. Means were computed to examine students' responses to the relationship indices when looking at minority and non-minority status (See Table 46).

Table 46: Mean Values for Relationship Indices by Minority/Non-minority Status

Ethnicity	Trust	Control Mutuality	Satisfaction	Commitment	Exchange Relationship	Communal Relationship
Minority						
Mean	4.57	4.35	4.78	4.54	4.45	4.19
Std. Dev.	0.73	0.85	0.82	0.85	1.04	0.90
Non-minority						
Mean	4.78	4.47	4.98	4.75	4.41	4.40
Std. Dev.	0.78	0.92	0.90	1.02	0.89	1.05

ANOVA was performed using the composite relationship variables as dependent variables and the minority/non-minority variable as the independent variable (see Table 47). A statistically significant difference was found for trust ($F(1, 606) = 14.381, p < .001$), satisfaction ($F(1, 607) = 9.848, p < .001$), commitment ($F(1, 607) = 8.615, p = .003$), and communal relationship ($F(1, 608) = 9.134, p = .003$). No statistically significant differences were found for control mutuality or exchange relationship. Post-hoc analysis could not be performed because fewer than three groups were being compared.

Table 47: ANOVA for Minority/Non-Minority and Relationship Indices

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Trust	14.381	$p < .001$
Control Mutuality	2.5257	.112
Satisfaction	12.295	$p < .001$
Commitment	9.056	.003
Exchange Relationship	0.225	.635
Communal Relationship	8.973	.003

To further examine this question, means were computed to examine students' responses to the relationship indices when looking at ethnicity (See Table 48). Only those ethnicities with N s larger than 30 were examined. According to McClave and Benson (1991), samples having N s of 30 or greater are appropriately analyzed using ANOVA.

Table 48: Ethnicity Means for Relationship Indices

Ethnicity	Trust	Control Mutuality	Satisfaction	Commitment	Exchange Relationship	Communal Relationship
African American						
Mean	4.38	4.31	4.41	4.28	4.51	3.87
Std. Dev.	0.71	0.80	0.81	0.79	1.04	0.81
Asian						
Mean	4.56	4.13	4.86	4.52	4.30	4.16
Std. Dev.	0.89	1.03	0.79	0.96	1.14	0.94
Caucasian						
Mean	4.78	4.47	4.98	4.75	4.41	4.40
Std. Dev.	0.78	0.92	0.90	1.02	0.89	1.05
Hispanic						
Mean	4.76	4.50	5.09	4.79	4.46	4.51
Std. Dev.	0.63	0.78	0.71	0.78	0.99	0.85

In addition, ANOVA was performed using the composite relationship variables as dependent variables and ethnicity as the independent variable (see Table 49). A statistically significant difference was found for trust ($F(3, 565) = 6.205, p < .001$), satisfaction ($F(3, 566) = 9.762, p < .001$), commitment ($F(3, 566) = 5.112, p < .001$), and communal relationship ($F(3, 567) = 6.969, p < .001$). No statistically significant differences were found for control mutuality or exchange relationship.

Table 49: ANOVA for Ethnicity and Relationship Indices

Outcome Factor	F	Significance
Trust	6.205	$p < .001$
Control Mutuality	2.311	.075
Satisfaction	9.762	$p < .001$
Commitment	5.549	$p < .001$
Exchange Relationship	0.465	.707
Communal Relationship	7.087	$P < .001$

To further explore this research question, Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences among ethnicities in relation to the relationship indices (See Table 50). Tukey's HSD was chosen as the means to perform post-hoc comparisons because it well-known, simple, widely used, flexible in application, and controls Type I error (Hays, 1981). This analysis reveals that Caucasian ($m = 4.78$, $sd = 0.78$) and Hispanic/Latino ($m = 4.76$, $sd = 0.63$) students are more likely to trust the University of Florida than are African-American/Black students ($m = 4.38$, $sd = 0.71$). Asian students ($m = 4.56$, $sd = 0.89$) are not significantly different from any of the other groups for this item.

No significant differences are found among students of any ethnicity when examining control mutuality. Caucasian ($m = 4.98$, $sd = 0.90$) and Hispanic/Latino ($m = 5.09$, $sd = 0.71$) students are more satisfied with their time at the University of Florida than are African-American/Black students ($m = 4.41$, $sd = 0.81$). Again, Asian students ($m = 4.86$, $sd = 0.79$) are not significantly different from any of the other groups for this item. Caucasian ($m = 4.75$, $sd = 1.02$) and Hispanic/Latino ($m = 4.79$, $sd = 0.78$) students

are more likely to believe the University of Florida has committed to them than are African-American/Black students ($m = 4.28$, $sd = 0.79$). Asian students ($m = 4.52$, $sd = 0.96$) are not significantly different from any of the other groups for this item.

No significant differences are found among students of any ethnicity when examining exchange relationships. Caucasian ($m = 4.40$, $sd = 1.05$) and Hispanic/Latino ($m = 4.51$, $sd = 0.85$) students are more likely to believe communal relationships exist at the University of Florida than are African-American/Black students ($m = 3.87$, $sd = 0.81$). Asian students ($m = 4.16$, $sd = 0.94$) are not significantly different from any of the other groups for this item.

Table 50: Tukey's HSD for Ethnicity and Relationship Variables

Index	(I) Ethnicity	(J) Ethnicity	Mean Difference	Significance
Trust	African American	Asian	-.18	.632
		Caucasian	-.40	.001
		Hispanic	-.38	.014
	Asian	African American	.18	.632
		Caucasian	-.22	.342
		Hispanic	-.19	.580
	Caucasian	African American	.40	.001
		Asian	.22	.342
		Hispanic	.01	.995
	Hispanic	African American	.38	.014
		Asian	.19	.580
		Caucasian	.01	.995
Control Mutuality	African American	Asian	.18	.757
		Caucasian	-.17	.477
		Hispanic	-.20	.535
	Asian	African American	-.18	.757
		Caucasian	-.35	.115
		Hispanic	-.38	.154
	Caucasian	African American	.17	.477
		Asian	.35	.115
		Hispanic	.01	.991
	Hispanic	African American	.20	.535
		Asian	.38	.154
		Caucasian	.01	.991
Satisfaction	African American	Asian	-.45	.053
		Caucasian	-.56	.001
		Hispanic	-.67	.001
	Asian	African American	.45	.053
		Caucasian	-.12	.852
		Hispanic	-.23	.552
	Caucasian	African American	.56	.001
		Asian	.12	.852
		Hispanic	-.11	.750
	Hispanic	African American	.67	.001
		Asian	.23	.552
		Caucasian	.11	.750

Index	(I) Ethnicity	(J) Ethnicity	Mean Difference	Significance
Commitment	African American	Asian	-.24	.596
		Caucasian	-.47	.001
		Hispanic	-.51	.007
	Asian	African American	.24	.596
		Caucasian	-.23	.505
		Hispanic	-.27	.511
	Caucasian	African American	.47	.001
		Asian	.23	.505
		Hispanic	.01	.991
	Hispanic	African American	.51	.007
		Asian	.27	.511
		Caucasian	.01	.991
Exchange Relationship	African American	Asian	.21	.680
		Caucasian	.01	.862
		Hispanic	.01	.986
	Asian	African American	-.21	.680
		Caucasian	-.12	.887
		Hispanic	-.16	.832
	Caucasian	African American	-.01	.862
		Asian	.12	.887
		Hispanic	-.01	.984
	Hispanic	African American	-.01	.986
		Asian	.16	.832
		Caucasian	-.01	.984
Communal Relationship	African American	Asian	-.29	.465
		Caucasian	-.53	.001
		Hispanic	-.64	.001
	Asian	African American	.29	.465
		Caucasian	-.24	.488
		Hispanic	-.35	.290
	Caucasian	African American	.53	.001
		Asian	.24	.488
		Hispanic	-.11	.817
	Hispanic	African American	.64	.001
		Asian	.35	.290
		Caucasian	.11	.817

R5: Is Students' Ethnicity Related to their Perceptions of the University's Commitment to Diversity?

To answer this question, means were computed to examine minority/non-minority students' response to the diversity index (See Table 51).

Table 51: Mean Values for Diversity Index by Minority/Non-minority Status

Ethnicity	Diversity
Minority	
Mean	4.49
Standard Deviation	0.85
Non-Minority	
Mean	4.84
Standard Deviation	0.70

ANOVA was performed using the composite diversity variable as the dependent variable and the dichotomous minority/non-minority variable as the independent variable (See Table 52). A statistically significant difference was found for diversity ($F(1, 607) = 18.266, p < .001$). Post-hoc analysis could not be performed because fewer than three groups were being compared.

Table 52: ANOVA for Minority/Non-Minority Status and Diversity

Composite Variable	F	Significance
Diversity	18.266	$p < .001$

To further investigate this question, means were computed to examine students' responses to the diversity index by ethnicity (See Table 53).

Table 53: Mean Values for Diversity Index by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Diversity
African American/Black	
Mean	4.11
Standard Deviation	0.79
Asian	
Mean	4.59
Standard Deviation	0.90
Caucasian	
Mean	4.84
Standard Deviation	0.70
Hispanic/Latino	
Mean	4.80
Standard Deviation	0.73

In addition, ANOVA was performed using the composite diversity variable as the dependent variable and ethnicity as the independent variable (see Table 54). A statistically significant difference was found for diversity ($F(3, 566) = 21.200, p < .001$).

Table 54: ANOVA for Ethnicity and Diversity

Composite Variable	F	Significance
Diversity	21.200	$p < .001$

To further explore this research question, Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences among ethnicities in relation to the diversity index (See Table 55). This analysis reveals that Asian ($m = 4.59, sd = 0.90$), Caucasian ($m = 4.84, sd = 0.70$), and Hispanic/Latino ($m = 4.80, sd = 0.73$) students are more positive about the University of Florida's commitment to diversity than are African-American/Black students ($m = 4.11, sd = 0.79$).

Table 55: Tukey's HSD for Ethnicity and Diversity Variable

Index	(I) Ethnicity	(J) Ethnicity	Mean Difference	Significance
Diversity	African American	Asian	-.49	.005
		Caucasian	-.73	.001
		Hispanic	-.70	.001
	Asian	African American	.49	.005
		Caucasian	-.25	.199
		Hispanic	-.21	.485
	Caucasian	African American	.73	.001
		Asian	.25	.199
		Hispanic	.01	.973
	Hispanic	African American	.70	.001
		Asian	.21	.485
		Caucasian	-.01	.973

Research questions 6 and 7, which have to do with administrators' perceptions of students' relationships and diversity on campus, are answered with the data from the open-ended surveys. Interviewees will not be identified by name or title as permission to do so was not granted in every case.

Involvement

Many interviewees suggested that the more involved a student is with the University of Florida, the happier he or she would be because of the connections that would be built. They also stated that students are encouraged from the moment they step foot on campus to establish ties that allow them to make the most of their experience.

One interviewee said that communication with students was very necessary and mentioned the importance of PREVIEW, the student orientation program, during which students learn about the university's resources, sense of community, and the importance of becoming involved.

Similarly, another participant stated that the university wants to involve students but this involvement is for the benefit of both the student and the University of Florida:

We believe that if you (students) do that, and we think that research shows this nationally, that you will get more out of the university. You'll be more connected. You'll feel better about your experience. You'll get the same education in some sense. You'll get the same piece of paper when you leave here--You are an accountant. You are an engineer.--But you'll feel better about it. You'll feel more connected to the institution and you'll feel that you got more out of it. And I think you do.

While you could maybe get the same leadership development from a church or a community agency like Kiwanis or Key Club or something like that by having those same types of leadership development experiences and community growing experiences within the institution with other students, it connects that same kind of thing to the institution and your memories of the institution will be more positive. You'll look back and link to it.

If you look at the way we deal with alumni it goes back to, "What college were you in? What program were you in? What professor were you connected to? What was your relationship to the university?"

And students who had none and lived in an apartment off-campus and came here and went to class here and left or who came here as a transfer student have no more connection [to the university] than the identity of the football team, some visible icon like the president, like Lombardi, something like that.

Compared to someone who was a senator, was in a fraternity or sorority, the president of the karate club--those kinds of students form some bonds. Those sorts of students feel some sort of relationship and it's even more so when they get into their college and connect with a professor and do research with that professor. They're the ones that probably come back and also give money to the institution. They say, "I care about it." They get involved and join the Gator Club.

Interviewees say that involvement not only leads to greater happiness and success but also to a sense of ownership in the university. One official stated the university is

very lucky that students want to be a part of the institution and want to make contributions to the quality of the university's academic and social existence. Another respondent added that student leaders take ownership of the university: "They really feel it is theirs to run and control and it's their obligation--that they're really the ones that have a say."

However, some officials did note that many students do not wish to be actively involved in the day-to-day functions of the University of Florida; some students merely want to attend classes. Although these administrators clearly believed such students are missing out, they did not think that non-involvement necessarily leads to a negative relationship with the university. One administrator said that even students who do their own thing and only attend classes would say, "I'm glad to be here and I enjoy wearing orange and blue shirts and going to football games." Similarly, another interviewee stated uninvolved students do not necessarily have negative feelings toward the university: "They'd probably say, 'It's ok. Nothing's great. Nothing's bad. But it's a good relationship.'"

Pride and Loyalty

Participants were very aware that most students take great pride in being a part of the University of Florida. They take being a Gator very seriously and profess a profound love and loyalty for the institution.

One administrator said that not only would most students recommend the University of Florida to a friend, more than 90 percent of students would attend the university again if they had the chance to do it over. Another participant added that the

university is very lucky because students not only come to the institution but they stay: “They don’t leave. They say that they have a great sense of pride in the institution. They like the place. This is where they want to be.” Another official noted the cyclical pattern of this devotion and termed it “happiness breeding happiness.”

Other interviewees went even further stating that students personalize their experience by becoming “Gators.” They said that students profess a great love and loyalty to the University of Florida that they are willing to defend. As one respondent said, “It’s (this love) just part of being a Gator. I think there are some students who love being a Gator, love being a part of this place because it is so fast paced and exciting and it is easy to get caught up in that.”

Another administrator made the same point and added to this that this phenomenon is something many universities want to achieve but are often unable to replicate:

There is a lot of pride in being a Gator. That’s a real positive thing that we have the other institutions work their butts off and spend all kinds of money on and can’t get anywhere near what we have at this institution. And we think it helps this university. It makes us a much stronger place and a much more attractive place in terms of students who come here and I think it helps students because it gives them a sense of how much the university cares. We want them to be successful. And we will provide as many opportunities as we can to help them be successful in their personal lives as well as in their academic pursuits.

Community of Learning

Interviewees also noted the importance of interaction and the vital role of community in the university-student relationship. They strongly believe that the

University of Florida exists for students' and society's benefit. As one participant said, "We benefit as an institution when we add something to society." Others were quick to mention that the university as a community is greater than any one piece. As one administrator said,

I think one of the strong things about UF is the strong sense of community we have here. Students are very happy with their UF experience. People feel a part of this community....We are the biggest and the best university in the state and one of the top universities in the United States....We provide leaders for society and our state and our nation because that's the type of institution we are and that's the role that you play when you are at the level UF is.

Another interviewee added that the University of Florida is a resource to the state because everyone in the state benefits from its existence:

When I was in school myself I saw proposals that the state, the nation itself could justify giving this away for free because the value of someone educated is much more to the society in general than the uneducated person. And that is based upon the fact that they will be more responsible citizens and take more leadership positions but also that they'll earn more money and pay more taxes. They'll learn common sets of ideas that will be discussed and shared within a community. So charging for it--you can almost argue for giving it away. So I think we all benefit dramatically from students' being educated.

Other respondents noted that this community is created by the interaction among students, faculty, staff, and administration. As one respondent said,

If you look at the university and truly define it as a learning institution, you have to realize that learning goes both ways...I have heard many faculty members talk about what they have learned by teaching as well as hopefully what students are gaining from the experience. That's why I get a little upset by the distance education stuff. Even though I think all that web-based stuff is great, I still think you need that conversational element. I think that it is key.

Another official made the same argument,

We're not an institution that just gives information out over the internet. The idea of a university is a community where it is continuous learning. We come together at a place called a campus like the one here in Gainesville, because somehow that interaction between students and faculty and students and students and all of us together somehow becomes greater as a whole.

We learn more about history or physics or ourselves or all three of those by the interaction of working together in an academic community. I think that will always be the case despite the wonderful advances of computers and so-forth. What is the university? It's not just the faculty. It's not just the students. It's not just administration. It's all of that together and its goal is to educate students and to prepare them as best as we can for whatever it is that they intend to do and we think that that can be done most effectively with a process of interaction and so the university needs that kind of student activity and involvement. We call that these days engaged education.

Service and Value

Several interviewees mentioned that the university-student relationship is very service oriented, stating that many students look at their relationship with the university as a customer relationship. They said that students believe they are entitled to certain a certain level of service and have come to expect it. As one interviewee stated, "It's up to the university to provide and up to the student to take advantage of what's provided."

Another administrator went even further in his assessment of this customer mentality by likening it to the kind of relationship a person would have with his or her utility company:

There's a famous quote from a Carnegie Commission Report that says that students today have a relationship with universities that is somewhat akin to a public utility--that you pay your bills, you go to class and you go home. And you don't think about it any more than is it [are the lights] on or off. Does the switch work or doesn't it?

One participant noted that the university has been working very hard to make the campus more student-friendly in an effort to step up its service to the population. She mentioned that the University of Florida has been making a huge effort to make the educational experience easier to manage by allowing students access to the information they need to make good decisions. "Students really are our consumers," she said. "I hate to use those words. They are our clients. I think that if we want to stay in business, and get better and better and attract the best students, we have to do a good job."

Another official further explained this point by stating good service begins with the first impression the university makes on prospective students. He added that good service encompasses student orientation, the ability of students to register for classes, positive interaction with faculty, the opportunity to study abroad or to take part in research, access to advisers, and the university's ability to respond to students' concerns.

In the end, however, it seems that the most important value the University of Florida can offer students is the brand name of the university itself. Administrators noted that the influence of the university's name and its reputation were crucial. As one said, many students choose to attend the University of Florida because of "its solid academic reputation, its excellent record at helping them with their careers and their entrance into graduate and professional schools."

Another administrator added that students are ambassadors who add to the university's reputation with every success: "Every time they (students) have some sort of personal or professional success it should remind them where they got their training and they got their training at the University of Florida."

Fairness and Caring

Interviewees stated that to build and maintain good relationships with University of Florida students, the administration must be fair, consistent, and caring. As one administrator said,

I think that there are no gimmicks....I think that from the secretaries to the faculty to the president to the alumni to the staff to everybody, I think that there has to be a sense of spirit, a genuine act of caring that goes on everyday for students to feel like this is our place, they have an investment in it, they believe in it, they can be proud of it and it has treated them fairly. That doesn't mean they always have to get their way. They may get a parking ticket and they may not get the grades that they want but it means that they are treated with respect and caring and in their college people know who they are and care about them. It's a long-term kind of thing. It can be nurtured.

Similarly, another interviewee made the point that students must be treated fairly and consistently in all situations. He added that one way to do this is to make certain everyone is held to the same rules and standards: "When we tell them, 'This is what we do and this is why we do it,' it needs to be the truth. That really is what we do and that really is the policy. And that it holds true for everybody and not just the sons of famous people, members of certain groups or whatever." He then said that students will see right through preferential treatment.

Another administrator added that the university must be sure to keep any promises it makes by putting resources where they are needed:

We have a tracking program that says if you keep on track you can graduate in a certain amount of time and those classes have to be available to students. If we state that you get a top-notch education that will get you a job, then career planners and recruiters have to come to campus. If we say that you will develop relationships with faculty, then faculty have to be willing to spend the time with students.

Influence and Input

These interviewees stated that students have a voice that is heard by the University of Florida administration. They also said that the administration wants to hear this voice and that is why students are invited to join committees and advisory boards. However, these participants were quick to note that this voice was more correctly termed influence or input--it is not considered power.

One participant said, "It's not a system that's designed for power, it's a system that's designed to educate," adding that students have a role in providing input and opinions when serving on committees and task forces. Another respondent stated that terming students' input as influence is more realistic because "committees and advisory groups don't have power, they have influence."

Another administrator said that the reason students do not have much control over classroom issues and some university policy and rules is because an institution as complex as the University of Florida "has to be administered and managed or not function at all."

Another interviewee added that at times the university itself is not in total control over what happens:

In the real world, a lot of times decisions at a land grant institution are not always made by the institution but by other powers and are then passed down to the institutions. Students don't know that. A lot of times, it looks like the university is doing something to them which in fact the system is doing. So if you could have a truly democratic society, it would be wonderful, but you don't. You have a society in an institution that is based on information more than individual input. And the information, or the data, will say, "students need to do this or that" and sometimes it is a dictate and they have to live with it.

Another administrator pointed out that students can make their opinions known without even making a sound: “Students can always vote with their feet. They can go someplace else. If enough students walked, we’d be making changes.”

The People’s University

Interviewees were well aware of the university’s heritage as a “good old boys” institution. It is obvious in their remarks that they do not see this as the university’s future and understand that it is very important for all students--no matter what their gender, race, or creed--to feel accepted and a part of the University of Florida. As one respondent said,

This is a public university. It is owned by all the people of the state. It is for all of the people, not just a segment of the people. The people who work here, even the president, do not own this university. We are simply the stewards caring out the policies that the public decides that we should. This is the people’s university. And that means all of the people. So we are not serving the people’s needs in this state if we are not doing everything that we can to make this equally accessible and successful for every group in the state, not just some privileged group depending on money, place of residence, or color of skin or gender.

Another official noted that in addition to being open to all citizens’ the University of Florida must be a leader in diversity initiatives:

It’s important for the University of Florida to be a leader in diversity. And our student body in terms of numbers should be representative of the citizens of the state of Florida. So our challenge is always to recruit underrepresented populations and make them feel a part of this community. I think it’s important because we are the flagship institution...It clearly is an academic institution that is concerned with access and equal opportunity and helping young people achieve their career goals and academic inspirations.

Another administrator added that without diversity, a true educational institution does not exist:

There is no way to have a university that calls itself an educational institution that does not take into consideration the needs, the characteristics, the attributes, the differences of all people. Otherwise, you just cookie cut. We are not in the business of cookie cutting people. We're in the business of educating people so diversity becomes really a cornerstone of higher education. You can't do it completely without entertaining, without accepting, without embracing all viewpoints--or at least considering them. You can't embrace them all. You have to consider them all. You have to make them all valuable.

Similarly, one participant mentioned that the University of Florida should be a role model for society when it comes to diversity in order to create a better environment and more interaction among students in and out of the classroom. He also said that the university needs to promote communication between minority and non-minority students to build understanding. "The university ought to be a model for the rest of society in the ways in which the students of all backgrounds interact with each other," he argued.

However, some administrators were aware that the university has not yet attained such a goal. They noted that some minority students still do not feel a part of the institution and the university must somehow make the institution welcoming and comfortable to all students no matter what their previous experience or background might be. Another participant mentioned that not only do some students feel uncomfortable at the university, but they also feel that they do not belong because of the university's all White, all male heritage.

Yet another official made the point that there is a risk of alienating some students when diversity is embraced:

There is always the possibility of backlash of (non-minority) students who say “Why are these students getting so much extra attention? What does this mean?” So you might be building a negative relationship with those students (non-minority students) because they say “Why are you doing all that for them (minority students)?”

Still another respondent said that the university cannot afford to treat students differently and that the university must make an effort to allow everyone to feel included in the larger community so all students can have a positive University of Florida experience. Making this point, one administrator explained: “I think that everyone who comes to UF and that we’ve accepted needs to feel included as part of the larger community and we can’t afford to be treating some folks differently than others. Everyone should have a positive UF experience.”

Preparation for a Multicultural Society

Participants realized that the make-up of American society is changing and that students need to be prepared to function in a multicultural society. These officials also believed there is great value in learning different perspectives and in being exposed to new ideas. As one official stated,

A value of coming to a large university like this is that this is like real life. You never know what you are going to face in the work place. I think that part of what the university should do is get students to interact with the bigger world and without diversity you are missing out on it. It is a very important part of relating.

Another interviewee said that learning in a diverse environment is very important because universities must prepare students for society and how to function in it. She added that as society continues to become more and more diverse, so must the university.

Still another respondent said that interaction among students with different backgrounds prepares students for real-life experiences.

One participant added that students will bring new ideas and understanding back to the communities they grew up in, helping others to see the importance of diversity to their lives. However, he also noted that diversity is an issue society is trying to tackle:

I think it's (diversity) one of the key issues for our society to struggle with. The writing is on the wall that we're a diverse community. My daughter goes to a high school where there is no majority population. It's a wonderful experience. It allows a different type of relationship to exist. It doesn't mean it's perfect. It has the same problems any other school has but the subtleness about it continues to come through. Being around people who look differently, and speak differently and have different values than you is ok.

We don't have to be any different than what we want to be but we do live with people that are different than us. And I think that is one of the really important things that gets confused. Students say, "You just want me to change the way I think. You want me to act differently. You want me to behave differently." I don't think anyone is saying that. I think that when we celebrate diversity, we're not saying that everyone should be the same. We're saying that isn't it great that we're not the same and look at the neat things in this person and I want to know more about that.

One participant added that the importance of diversity is intensified by the rollback of affirmative action policies:

This is a challenging time not only for this institution but for all institutions because of the rollback of affirmative action. The perceptions are that it is more difficult than ever because the door that opened is closing. So all institutions, all major institutions, are going to have to fight that perception. You cannot fight that perception with another perception. You have to fight it with a reality. And the reality is that we will have to do a better job of bringing in students and making sure that their experience is an adequate one. Is everybody going to be thrilled on the way out? No, it doesn't matter who they are. But we have to make sure we close the gap between the differences that one group feels over another. And that is hard. Nobody has the answer to that, but it is a

question we have to keep asking. And it is a situation we have to keep dealing with. We can't ever say, "Ah, we're tired of dealing with this." Because we do a disservice to the institution if we do that.

Another administrator noted that this generation of college students is very aware of the importance of diversity and he seemed quite optimistic that they would embrace diversity. As he said,

I think they are way ahead of where my generation was. They've grown up in a different time and I am much more optimistic than I am pessimistic about their appreciation of diversity, their understanding of it, their willingness to make it work.

Diverse but still White

All administrators interviewed agreed that minority and majority students would have different perceptions about their relationships with the university and about the current commitment to diversity on campus. In general, they believe that majority students would be more positive and minority students more negative in their assessments.

However, some thought that assessments about relationships and diversity also would differ among the minority groups. All respondents who believed there were differences commented that African-American students would have the least positive perceptions. One respondent offered the following insights:

I think that Hispanic students have grown by far the most rapidly here. I think that their numbers are now over 3,500....Many of these students I would say are typical of other students on this campus and really feel a strong identity with this institution and feel quite comfortable here and a part of it.

We have another last chunk called Asian Americans and it is hard to group them all under that name because it is a very large and

growing pot. It's hard to generalize about them but they have had a remarkable success at this institution for the last 15 to 20 years and their numbers continue to grow, especially in the sciences and the professional schools.

And our African-American population at the university is about 2,000 to 2,500 and that figure has unfortunately not grown very much. It's kind of plateaued for some years now. I want to believe that the experience of most of these students is more positive now than it used to be. I have known hundreds and hundreds of African-American students here and know them well but I also know that there is a feeling of relative isolation here because they number only six percent of the students here and there are insufficient numbers of African-American faculty and staff.

Other administrators made the point that negative perceptions among minority students may be caused by a lack of faculty and administrative role models at the university. They mentioned that students of color have very few minority mentors and very few places on campus where they can see a person who looks like them in a position of power.

However, another official noted that African-American students have difficulty with the "Whiteness" of the University of Florida in general. He commented,

When you talk to African-American students as I did earlier this week, one group of students talked about being overwhelmed by the "Whiteness" of the University of Florida. They had been told about the university being a predominantly White institution. They talked to friends. They talked to former students but they said you really don't understand until you're here and you're going to PREVIEW or you're going to the first week of class and you're the only black student. You walk through your residence hall floor and you're the only Black student on the floor and that has an impact on their perceptions about the university.

Another participant talked about similar feelings and experience among African-American students,

I think African-American students will comment that this is basically a predominantly White institution. It feels like that there's a notion from the majority students that they are a little different, a little strange. They don't get invited to do things they see their White counterparts being invited to do with other students. They get singled out in class-rooms they say to reflect the opinion of Black students or the Black view of the issue under discussion in class when no one asks a White student for the white view of something. And I think the Black students feel that they are not in the position to comment on how all of the Black community feels. And that this is a notion that some teachers have that is inappropriate.

Another administrator added that students coming from predominantly minority institutions also have difficulty in adjusting to an institution that is predominantly majority:

Many of our minority students come out of minority high schools and are thrown into this culture which is predominantly majority. You can very much feel isolated, alienated, alone, discriminated against. It is very possible that you can feel that way and I think that the students I have spoken to say those feelings are common--feelings of there is not enough of us. [Students say] "I'm not, my sense of myself, is not respected. People just don't understand why I am here and people look down their noses at me." I hear a lot of it. I have heard it on every campus to be fair that I have been on, every majority campus.

She then added that this situation occurs because "the numbers are not strong enough to make it feel any other way for minority students."

Still another interviewee suggested that some African-American students have difficulties because they do not have the support of their families when they decide to come to an institution like the University of Florida rather than an historically Black college or university. As he explained,

Within the historically white community of the state of Florida, it's almost expected that this is where you would go. If you have the ability, if you make that commitment, if you focus the resources of the family and that child by honing them into going to this institution; that is the ultimate outcome.

It's not so much for the other groups because, especially for Blacks,...they have a choice. They know if they come here it's been a choice. Their parents did not come here. We're still in a generation where their parents could not come here. So if their parents are college educated, they went to another school. They did not come here and have pretty strong feelings about that--they (the White community) didn't let them come here. And that's a real conscious thing [for African-American parents].

So therefore there's a lot of discussion because when a student makes that commitment, they are really putting a lot on the line and they are not necessarily getting a lot of support from their families that other students are. I've heard from other people who work in admissions, that parents will say, "I told you not to go to this school. I told you it wasn't going to be that good."

And research has been done by Joe Feagin here that the real crisis of an African-American family today is--do you send your child to a place that is what is called an historically Black institution like FAMU (Florida A&M University) or Howard where they will be cared for, protected and enriched as Black people or do you send them to these mega-universities that are considered the top echelon--the Berkeleys, the Virginias, the Michigans, the Harvards--where they are still the minorities and still not accepted personally and will have to pay the price for that.

Which one do you choose if you are a parent? Where do you help your child go to school? Where they will be cared for and nurtured or where they will be in a battle and get a better perceived education? That's a tough call especially for Blacks and also for Hispanics in this state because some institutions have much larger populations where they are more comfortable but it's not perceived as good of a school by most definitions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overall it is difficult to determine if students surveyed for this study describe their relationship with the University of Florida as positive or negative. All means for the composite variables fall within the neutral range. Means for satisfaction (4.92), trust (4.71), and commitment (4.68) cluster more closely to the agree point, while means for control mutuality (4.43), exchange relationship (4.42), and communal relationship (4.34) are more closely clustered around the neutral point. However, when examining questions individually rather than as a part of indices, students believe the University of Florida treats them fairly ($m = 5.07$), that the university has the ability to achieve its mission ($m = 5.16$), and that they are happy with the university ($m = 5.40$). Although many of the demographic variable measured (gender, first in family to attend college, and year in school) did not seem to mitigate these perceptions to any strong degree, differences clearly arise when considering students' ethnicity.

Administrators in general had positive perceptions about students' relationships with the University of Florida. The administrators interviewed believe that students enjoy their time at the university. They did suggest that the more involved a student was the happier he or she would be. But they also stated that even students with low involvement with university activities are generally satisfied with the university and would chose again to attend here.

Similar to J. Grunig and Huang's results (summarized in Hon and J. Grunig, 1999), items having to do with control mutuality are the weakest indicators of a positive relationship. Students seem to question the power balance between the university and themselves, and they also seem to wonder in particular whether the university really listens to them. Perhaps this finding is due to the general nature of a university. Universities have set rules and abide by them; it is often difficult and time consuming to make a change to policy. Students may take these rules and regulations for granted and therefore see little balance in power between themselves and the university.

Administrators suggest that rather than power, students have access and influence in what goes on at the university. They cited many examples of how students are involved in committees, meetings, and decision making. However, many students may not have this kind of involvement or access to the governing forces and therefore feel that their voice is not heard.

These findings about control mutuality, of course, present an opportunity for public relations. Given how intensely competitive the college market for top students is, universities would be especially wise to ensure they have meaningful policies and programs in place for hearing about and acting on students' needs and concerns. Universities also need to remember that students who feel ignored are unlikely to become supportive alumni.

These data evoke questions about what kind of relationship universities are building with students. Are they communal relationships based on a genuine commitment to behaving socially responsible toward students (i.e., truly valuing students' input into organizational decision-making) or are they merely exchange

relationships whereby universities treat students with concern because they expect something in return (e.g., donations after graduation)?

Students in this study perceive their relationship with the University of Florida to have dimensions of both exchange and communality, although overall students were more likely to agree with the indicators of an exchange relationship. The administrators surveyed here also seem to perceive the university-student relationship as a mix of exchange and communal. Many mentioned how the university must meet the needs of the students in order to keep them as “satisfied customers.” Obviously, this description connotes an exchange relationship. However, they also suggested that the needs of society also must be met by the university.

Therefore it seems that administrators clearly see one goal of the University of Florida is to prepare its students to serve their communities upon graduation. Perhaps these findings are indicators that university-student relationships are neither exclusively exchange nor communal but a combination of the two dimensions.

These findings seem to resonate with the mixed-motive model of public relations discussed by Murphy (1989) and later by Dozier, L. Grunig, and J. Grunig (1995) (see Brunner & Hon, 2000). This model suggests organizations that practice excellent public relations engage in both asymmetrical and symmetrical communication with publics. That is, organizations act in their own self-interest but not so much so that they compromise their long-term relationships with the publics upon whom the organization depends. Further research is needed to better explore how exchange and communal relationships correspond to models of public relations. Although, it seems that overall the University of Florida has not, in the pursuit of tangible returns for the university,

neglected to build socially responsible relationships with students and other constituencies, some students may not be aware of this commitment. Therefore it seems that universities may benefit from greater promotion of their community based efforts and programs.

This study's results show that differences arise students' responses when considering ethnicity. Post hoc analysis of ANOVAs performed using the composite relationship variables as dependent variables and ethnicity as the independent variable reveals that Caucasian and Hispanic/Latino students are more likely to trust, be satisfied with, feel a commitment toward, and believe that communal relationships exist at the University of Florida than African-American/Black students. This analysis also shows that Asian students' responses did not significantly differ from those of any other ethnic group.

These findings seem to resonate with what administrators said. For example, one former administrator mentioned that Hispanic/Latino students are continually growing in number and seem to be quite happy and satisfied with the university. Asian students were characterized as very successful at the university and their numbers also are rising. African-American/Black students were described as the least satisfied with their time at the university.

Many administrators stated that African-American/Black students have a very difficult time feeling like they belong at the University of Florida because they so rarely see anyone like themselves in class, in the dorms, or walking across campus. Although these students are aware of the "Whiteness" of the university, it seems they cannot

understand its impact upon their happiness until they are students here and live out their day-to-day activities.

A recent article in the Saint Petersburg Times states that African-American/Black students do not feel welcome at the University of Florida. Students interviewed for the article noted instances of racism both in and outside the classroom. As examples, students mentioned being one of the few students of color in every class, being called upon to reflect the Black view on a particular issue, and being limited due to perceptions of under-qualification (Klein and Kassab, 2000).

Edwin Dorin, dean of the University of Texas' Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, says that race is something minority students never forget:

My guess is that most members of minority groups on majority campuses feel that they stand out some how or they're noticeable. That's something that you never forget. This is a society in which you never forget that you're Black or Hispanic. It's a part of you and there are some instances in which you feel the race issues very strongly. You cannot help but feel the race issue very strongly at this campus (University of Texas at Austin) because of the added constraints or problems, if you will, imposed by the Hopwood decision (ruling outlawing affirmative action in the state's public institutions) and other decisions that affect this university's ability to recruit a diverse student body and recruit a diverse and high-quality faculty. (quoted in Evelyn, 1999, p. 17)

In addition, Bowen and Bok (1998) and Gurin (1999) note that students who are a part of highly visible yet under-represented groups on overwhelmingly White campuses tend to under-perform academically and have difficulty in adjusting to the environment. According to university statistics, under half of the University of Florida's African-American/Black students earn their degree within six years while 69 percent of Caucasian and 63 percent of Hispanic/Latino students do (Klein & Kassab, 2000). Gurin (1999)

suggests that the only way to alleviate this situation is to have an equitable representation of the under-represented groups thereby making the environment more comfortable.

Yet another shortcoming of the University of Florida is its inability to attract and retain minority faculty. According to Klein and Kassab (2000), roughly three percent of the university's faculty is African American. Students conceivably could graduate without ever having a minority professor for a class. This situation seems especially troubling to minority students some of whom say that Caucasian professors treat them as academic inferiors (Klein & Kassab, 2000). Although many universities have trouble attracting and retaining minority faculty, some suggest the University of Florida's biggest problem is cultural not competition (Klein & Kassab, 2000). The university is described as conservative and resistant to internal change (Klein & Kassab, 2000). Klein and Kassab (2000) note that this conservatism causes a trend toward assimilation, which minority faculty do not find welcoming.

In addition, African-American students may not have the support of their families when they make the decision to come to the University of Florida because their parents may have been denied access to the school. Many African Americans who live in the state of Florida hold the institution in low regard because of its history (Klein & Kassab, 2000). The university did not allow African Americans to enroll as undergraduates until 1962. Nine years later, 71 African-American students requesting more minority enrollment, more minority faculty, and greater support services were ordered arrested by then-president Stephen O'Connell for a staging sit-in at the administration building (Klein & Kassab, 2000). Nearly half of the university's remaining African-American students withdrew from school the following week (Klein & Kassab, 2000).

Therefore it seems that African-American/Black students often will isolate themselves from the rest of the university community, which is quite easy to do considering the size of the institution. Klein and Kassab (2000) contend that feelings of isolation are not unusual at the university, which is the least diverse institution in the state's university system and where self-segregation seems a part of the university's culture. This isolation may explain in part the lower scores for African-American/Black students on some of the relationship indicators. The administration should be paying attention to this situation as a public relations problem and opportunity.

Although the diversity index provides a mean of 4.71--within the neutral range but nearing the agree range--several individual questions about diversity show that students perceive the University of Florida to be genuinely committed to diversity. For example, students agree that the university believes there is value in having students from different backgrounds and cultures attend the institution ($m = 5.42$), that they are respected in class ($m = 5.16$), and that diversity is a part of the university's culture ($m = 5.13$). On Hon and Brunner's (1999) continuum, the university seems to be somewhere between "diversity as organizational culture" and "diversity as social responsibility." These responses suggest that students believe that diversity is part of the organizational ethos and that the university embraces diversity because the institution values the richness diversity brings to the educational experience.

At the same time, though, a lot of students reported feeling neutral about whether the university has a deep commitment to diversity. Students' ambivalence about the university's stance on diversity for the long haul is probably not surprising given the changing political climate in the state government. It remains to be seen whether the

progress the university has made toward diversity is enhanced or diminished by the One Florida plan and ultimately how either outcome affects the university's public relationships.

Post hoc analysis of the ANOVA performed using the diversity index as the dependent variable and ethnicity as the independent variable, again shows differences among the students' responses. More specifically, this testing reveals that Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic/Latino students are more positive about the University of Florida's commitment to diversity than are African-American/Black students.

Administrators mentioned many ways that the university has committed to diversity (for example, scholarships, cultural institutes, clubs, and organizations). However, they also noted that African-American/Black students most likely would be the least positive about diversity on campus. So, it seems that administrators know current diversity initiatives are not enough. Klein and Kassab (2000) state that the university must do more to make minority students feel welcome and comfortable. Perhaps one way to do this would be to increase minority student and faculty presence at the university.

This finding seems to relate to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, 1976; Miller, 1995). Although the university is offering hygiene factors such as scholarships, it seems that some minority students may need motivators such as creating a sense of welcome, creating a more comfortable environment by having more minority students and faculty, and perhaps giving minority students and faculty greater recognition for their accomplishments.

Most officials said that the University of Florida needs a strong leader to voice and show his or her commitment to diversity on campus. These interviewees suggested that without the backing of the top administration, students will be more cynical about diversity programs and initiatives; they will see these efforts as lip service unless someone with authority stands behind them with integrity. This situation may be another opportunity for the university to seize upon once a long-term president is found.

The open-ended survey data suggest that J. Grunig and Huang's (1998) relationship outcomes are indeed viable in the university context. For example, caring and fairness seem to most closely encompass the outcome labeled trust. Administrators mentioned issues of integrity, dependability, and competence, which are the underlying dimensions of trust as defined by Hon and J. Grunig (1999).

Control mutuality relates to input and influence. Interviewees spoke about this relationship outcome when discussing the role students play in decision making at the university. Obviously, input and influence have to do with the balance of power in the relationship.

Pride and loyalty most closely resonate with J. Grunig and Huang's (1998) concept of satisfaction. Administrators believe that students are very positive about the university and see the benefits of being a Gator outweighing the costs of being a student at the University of Florida.

Involvement seems to encompass the dimensions of J. Grunig and Huang's (1998) commitment. Administrators want students to be involved and spend time and resources to foster this involvement. Similarly, when students do engage with the university, they are making efforts to promote the relationship. Involvement also seems to relate to

McGregor's Theory Y (Harris, 1993; Miller, 1995). Administrators were well aware the students could reach self-actualization and be more productive and responsible individuals if they are included in the organization's decisions, are treated fairly, and are given meaningful tasks.

The exchange relationship variable is defined by service and value. The interviewees often alluded to marketing components when describing the University of Florida's relationship with students. Many believe students look at their relationship with the university as an exchange of services. Others noted the "brand name" of the University of Florida and how influential it is when students are looking for employment.

Lastly, a community of continuous learning sums up the components of a communal relationship. These administrators clearly saw the University of Florida as playing a role in forming a community and in giving back to the community for the greater good of the citizens of Florida and beyond.

Implications

For Theory

Theorists could use this study to further explore relationships in other organizations. They could use the survey and interview questions as guides in developing specialized instruments for the organization and publics they wish to examine. Another way this study could be used by theorists would be to further tease out the dimensions of communal and exchange relationships. With future studies, researchers could determine that communal and exchange relationships are part of a

continuum or they may determine that relationships are either purely communal or exchange.

This study also could be used by theorists to explore what exactly constitutes a relationship. Further research could determine the difference between a genuine relationship and mere interaction. Another important venture might be the development of stages of organization-public relationships much like those identified in the interpersonal literature.

Theorists could also use this study as a starting point for exploring the importance of diversity to public relations. Additional survey research could be done with other organizations and publics to determine if and how diversity is important at all organizational levels. In addition, theorists could do more research with college students to determine if and how attention to diversity relates to the building of self-identity.

For Practice

Practitioners could use this study to better market their university to minority students and faculty. The survey and interview data provide insights into which relationship variables minority students are positive and negative. The survey could be modified for use with faculty to gain knowledge of their perceptions. Knowing which of the relationship indicators minority students and faculty feel strongly and neutrally about could help practitioners in developing better student and faculty recruitment and retention programs. Therefore, if a university could show that it is minority-friendly and back this claim with data, minority students and faculty might decide to come to the institution and remain there because it would be perceived as a comfortable environment.

Practitioners also could use this information to build and maintain better relationships with current students. By doing so, the university's base of supportive alumni no doubt would be expanded. In addition, this study may lead to more dialogue between students and practitioners to further tease out student opinions on these topics.

Another way practitioners could use this study would be to design programs that promote diversity on campus. These results provide clues about what students of different ethnicities are thinking and feeling about their acceptance at the university. This information could help practitioners convince administrators that a genuine commitment to diversity is the hallmark of a truly inclusive university.

In addition, practitioners could use this study to help bring an end to the negative feelings and thoughts some members of the African-American community have about the University of Florida. To help gain credibility with this public, practitioners should attempt to make African-American students more comfortable at the university by increasing the presence of minority students and faculty at the campus. Chang et al. (1999) state that greater representation of women and minority faculty will change a university's organizational climate since they are more engaged in research in the areas of race and gender. Therefore increasing the presence of minority faculty may help to redefine long-held perceptions about the university.

Another public relations opportunity is diminishing the isolation many African-American students seem to feel at the University of Florida. One suggestion is to end the self-segregation that currently occurs on campus and to use various culture-specific organizations as bridges to the larger university population. Again having more minority representation at the student and faculty levels might also help this situation. Minority

faculty might be drawn to a campus where minority students are known to be satisfied; similarly, minority students might be drawn to a campus where minority faculty feel empowered. In addition, having more minority faculty may lead to minority students having more mentors. Although minority students may have many role models, it seems that they do not have many opportunities to develop one-on-one relationships with minority faculty. Having this mentoring relationship would provide minority students the chance to speak with faculty members who truly understood what they were experiencing and feeling.

Another problem practitioners will face is how to handle the One Florida plan. It has been suggested by many that race-neutral and merit based admissions do not work. Some scholars claim merit as defined by test scores is not an accurate measure of a student's ability or willingness to learn. In addition, Steele and Aronson (1995) state that minority students often do not do as well on tests such as the SAT due to the influence of stereotype threat. Bowen and Bok (1998) claim that race-neutral policies will cause a decline of nearly 50 percent of qualified minority students while increasing majority students' chance of admission by 1.5 percent. They further claim that a simple criterion such as being a part of the top 20 percent of one's class is not likely to be an effective way to create a diverse student body. In fact, Bowen and Bok (1998) say that such policies will diminish the number of minorities with the ability to hold leadership positions. Therefore it seems that more research must be done to determine predictors that more accurately reflect a student's ability to succeed in college.

Lastly, practitioners also may need to face the possibility of a backlash caused by the alienation some students may feel because of continued diversity efforts. Perhaps the

best solution to this problem is to reinforce how important it is for students to understand how to live in a multicultural society.

For Teaching

Public relations teachers could use this study to better understand public relationships and attempts to measure them. The survey used in this research could be further refined for use in other settings to help students learn about the importance of measuring relationships. In addition, academicians should revise their current class assignments and reading lists to include literature on relationships in their research and management courses.

Teachers also could use this study to promote diversity awareness in their classrooms and encourage a climate of respect for differences. With insight into both minority and majority students' opinions about diversity on campus, teachers could work with students to create a more positive, inclusive, and open environment. Following the suggestions of Treisman (1992), group learning could be emphasized to provide a comfortable, challenging, and supportive environment that allows for cross-ethnic friendships to form. Treisman (1992) found that an emphasis on working with peers to create a community based on intellectual and professional goals was one way to provide an environment in which minority students were not only comfortable but one in which they excelled. And Chang et al. (1999) suggest that the presence of more women and minority faculty will lead to more use of student central and active learning methods in the classroom.

Instructors also should further refine and develop class materials to reflect diverse perspectives and opinions, as well as add a discussion of diversity management to their course offerings. Again Chang et al. (1999) suggest that more women and minority faculty will lead to the inclusion of more perspectives in the curriculum. These steps would help emphasize to students the importance of being able to function in a multicultural society, as well as producing more positive student outcomes (Chang et al., 1999).

Limitations

Several limitations for this study exist. First and most obvious, this study cannot be generalized to students other than those who participated in the survey. Furthermore, women and minorities are over-represented in the sample.

The structure of the survey did not allow an open-ended option and therefore responses were forced ones. The use of both paper and on-line surveys and probability and non-probability sampling also creates confounds, which may have lowered the reliability of the results. External validity is also limited by the addition of non-probability sampling techniques. In addition, the original survey administered by the Division of Housing took place very near finals week, which possibly lowered response rates.

The unavailability of several key administrators is also a limitation of this study. Several key top administrators resigned during the course of this study, so the researcher was required to move down the organizational hierarchy to secure interviews. In addition, eight highly visible members of the former and current administration either

declined the chance to be interviewed for this project or never responded to inquiries. Their insight into this topic no doubt would have been very helpful to this research.

A final limitation of this study is the sudden politicization of diversity issues because of the One Florida initiative. Since diversity issues were in the forefront of many people's minds while the study was being conducted, opinions very easily could have been swayed or influenced by news coverage and opinion pieces about the plan and its effects on diversity. This attention temporarily could have intensified students' feelings about how diversity affects their lives, their studies, and their happiness at the university.

Future Research

Since this study was an exploratory one and one of the first to examine students' relationships with a university and the impact attention to diversity has upon them, there are several additional topics that could be examined with future research. For example, focus groups could be conducted with students of different ethnic backgrounds to get a better sense of how and if students of different cultures differ in how satisfied they are with the university, how trusting they are of its policies, and how committed they believe the institution is to their needs.

In addition, students could be asked more about their perceptions of communal and exchange relationships. It also would be interesting to investigate further whether students believe diversity is important and what they think the university is and is not doing to promote a diverse campus. Researchers also could explore the effect One Florida will have on students' beliefs and experiences.

Another way to approach this research would be as a longitudinal study. It could be very illuminating to see if and how students' perceptions about their relationships with the university and attention to diversity change from the time they are freshmen to when they are seniors.

Another suggestion is to compare the data collected in this study with data collected at a less diverse institution. This research might give further insight into whether or not living in a diverse environment leads to a more positive perspective about diversity and its importance. It seems important to examine the differences in perceptions about relationships at a small liberal arts college and the University of Florida and at a historically Black institution like Florida A&M University. These investigations would be an intriguing look into how an organization's level of requisite variety affects its public relationships.

A final idea for future study would be to study diversity at the University of Florida campus after One Florida has been instituted. Such a study would provide insights into whether or not the plan promotes diversity or if it actually limits a university's attempts to diversify its student body.

Conclusion

This study explored how students at the University of Florida describe their relationship with the university, examined students' perceptions of the university's commitment to diversity, and investigated how administrators think students perceive both their relationship with the University of Florida and the university's commitment to diversity.

Given that public relations and diversity issues are increasingly intertwined, an important task for public relations is to better understand how a critical public perceives its relationship with an organization and the organization's diversity management efforts. Since the composition of American society is changing and the presence of minorities is increasing, it is important for all people to understand the reality and importance of diversity to their lives.

This issue is especially salient for college students as they will soon be entering the workforce and most likely will be working with people from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures than their own. College, therefore, seems a perfect time to introduce students to perspectives, points-of-view, and cultures different than their own. Doing so may be an important step toward building and maintaining the positive public relationships universities and other institutions need to survive and prosper.

APPENDIX A

Please circle the number that you believe best indicates your agreement with each item and how it describes the relationship you have with the University of Florida. When answering each question, think about your relationship with the university as a whole and not a subsection such as the department or college to which you belong. In addition, answer each question thinking about your gender and ethnicity and how these factors influence your interaction with the university.

Answers of 1 correspond to very strongly disagreeing while answers of 2 correspond with strongly disagreeing and answers of 3 show an answer of disagreement. A response of 4 indicates a neutral response or having no opinion about the statement. Answers of 5 show an agreement with the statement while 6 show a strong agreement and 7 a very strong agreement. In addition, 0 corresponds to items that are not applicable to your situation.

	VSD	SD	D	N	A	SA	VSA	NA
1. UF treats students like me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. UF will make exceptions for students like me when it knows that it will gain something.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. I can see that UF wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. Students like me do not matter to UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. UF believes that there is value in having students from different backgrounds and cultures attend the university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6. Whenever UF makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship UF has established with students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8. Compared to other universities I am familiar with, I value my relationship with UF more.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
9. Students like me are respected in class at UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10. UF takes care of students who are likely to benefit it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11. Diversity among students is a basic part of the culture of UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12. UF can be relied on to keep its promises.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13. UF really listens to what students like me have to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	VSD	SD	D	N	A	SA	VSA	NA
14. Even though students like me will have a relationship with UF for a long time, it still expects something in return whenever it does us a favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15. I think that UF succeeds with little consideration of students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16. UF believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17. UF believes that having a diverse environment is a way to build long-term relationships with students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18. I feel that UF is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19. Most students like me are happy in their interactions with UF	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20. Whenever UF gives or offers something to students like me it generally expects something in return.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21. UF is very concerned about the welfare of students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22. UF appears to have many students of different ethnicities but it does not "feel diverse" because students do not mix.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23. Students like me are treated fairly by UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24. I feel very confident about UF's ability to achieve its mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25. There is a long-lasting bond between UF and students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26. UF does not especially enjoy giving help to community organizations and groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27. Students like me are very important to UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28. UF and students like me are attentive to what each other say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
29. I am happy with UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

	VSD	SD	D	N	A	SA	VSA	NA
30. I feel that students like me must stand up for themselves to be treated fairly by UF.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31. UF is working to correct the under-representation of minority students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32. UF has a tendency to ignore students like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33. UF has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34. Both UF and students like me benefit from their relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
35. I believe that UF takes opinions of students like me into account when making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
36. UF lacks a deep commitment to bringing students from different cultures and backgrounds to the university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

37. Gender

Male
Female

38. Are you the first in your family to attend college?

Yes
No

39. What year are you in your education?

Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Graduate

40. What best describes your ethnic background?

African American/Black
Asian
Biracial/Multiracial
Caucasian
Hispanic/Latino

Native American/American Indian

Pacific Islander

Other, please specify

APPENDIX B

Interview Survey Questions

How do you think students would describe their relationship with the university?

Why do you think this?

What factors do you think students consider when thinking about the relationship they have with the university?

How does the university try to build long-term relationships with students?

How does the university know if students are satisfied? Can you explain how this is done with an example?

Tell me how the university builds trust with students.

Do students have any power in their relationship with the university? Can you give examples?

How does the university make important decisions that concern students such as an increase in fees?

Why does the university enter into a relationship with its students? Who gains from these relationships?

How would students describe diversity on campus?

Is diversity of the student body important to UF?

How has the university committed to diversity? Can you give me some examples?

Do you think attention to diversity helps UF build better relationships with students?

Can you give an example of how attention to diversity does help build relationships with students?

If no, why do you think that attention to diversity is not important to students?

Can you give an example?

Do you think minority students would describe their relationship with the university differently than majority students? Why/Why not?

Would minority students describe UF's diversity any differently than majority students? Why/why not?

APPENDIX C

How would the typical undergraduate student describe his/her relationship with the university?

That is very hard to generalize because there are many, many pockets of students here defined by their various backgrounds, experiences and aspirations. There are groups of students that can be talked about more easily than others and that is my cop out to your question. There are some students who like this university because of its low cost and its solid academic reputation, it's excellent record at helping them with their careers and their entrance into graduate and professional schools. We are very lucky at the University of Florida that the huge, overwhelming majority of students who come here stay. They don't leave. They say that they have a great sense of pride in the institution. They like the place. This is where they want to be. It's not the first choice for all of our students. Many of them come from affluent homes and would have preferred to have gone to private institutions or institutions that are out of state but they can go here for 1/3 or 2/5 what they would pay elsewhere and they are proud to be here. We had some 20,000 applications for the freshman class so this is a very selective institution with excellent students.

Would you say minority students would have a different perspective than majority students?

Yes, I would although that has changed in the 27 years I have worked here and at Student Affairs. I think that then you have to talk about what minority students are you talking

about. I think that Hispanic students have grown by far the most rapidly here. I think that their numbers now are over 3500. Hispanic here in Florida generally means Cuban heritage as opposed to the Southwest where the dominant Hispanic students would be Mexican-American students. Many of those students I would say are typical of other students on this campus and really feel a strong identity with this institution and feel quite comfortable here and a part of it. We have another large chunk called Asian Americans and it is hard to group them all under that name but it is a very large and growing pot. It's hard to generalize about them but they have had a remarkable success at this institution for the last 15 to 20 years and their numbers continue to grow but especially in the sciences and the professional schools. And our African-American population at the university is about 2000 to 2500 and that figure has unfortunately not grown very much. It's kind of plateaued for some years now. I want to believe that the experience of most of these students is more positive now than it used to be. I have known hundred and hundreds of African-American students here and know them well but I also know that there is a feeling of relative isolation here because they number only six percent of the students here and there are insufficient numbers of African-American faculty and staff although there are more African-American staff and faculty than we used to have. Our applications from African-American students are encouraging and especially the graduation rate has gone up substantially for that group of students and the academic quality of those students had increased at the same time it has increased for all students.

Can you give me any ideas of what you think students may be thinking about when they think about their relationship with the university?

I don't think they think about it much at least as undergraduates. They are very practical minded at least more so than their parents when they attended college. They expect their institution to teach them well, to support their ideas. They luckily feel at this institution that they are part of it and want to contribute to it themselves. It's not that consumer mentality that I don't like at all and that I am happy to say it doesn't exist too much here. Many of our students are active participants in activities that contribute to the quality of the institution's life whether it be academic or extra-curricular.

Can you give me any ideas on how the university tries to build long-term relationships with its students?

I don't think you can fake that. I come from an institution in Iowa, my alma mater, which probably has the best record of that in the country. My loyalty and participation and in giving – it's something that is dear to my heart. I think that there are no gimmicks in that regard. I think that from the secretaries to the faculty to the president to the alumni to the staff to everybody, I think that there has to be a sense of spirit. A genuine act of caring that goes on everyday for students to feel like this is our place, they have an investment in it, they believe in it, they can be proud of it and it has treated them fairly. That doesn't mean they always have to get their way. They may get a parking ticket and they may not get the grades that they want but it means that they are treated with respect and caring and in their college people know who they are and care about them. It's a long-term kind of thing. It can be nurtured. I was always interested in looking to see if there were ways to do more of that while we were here. The institution that I had come

from, although it was smaller than this one, I felt that there were additional things that could be done to make the students feel a part of the place.

How does the university know if students are satisfied with UF?

We conduct formal surveys through the institutional research office and many individual departments do them. But frankly, more importantly, to make sure that faculty and staff are sitting down with students and getting regular feedback. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand those things. If you are tuned in and if you give students the chance to talk about their experiences at the institution then you get a pretty good notion.

How does the university try to build trust with its students?

I think the only way you can do that is to invite them into considerable positions of responsibility, respect their opinions, allow them a good deal of freedom, give them a chance to show that they are worthy of that trust, treat them as human beings, treat them as adults and respect their views.

Do students ever feel that they have power in their relationship with the university?

Certainly they do. That was much discussed before you were born in the 1960s on campuses everywhere. It's a word you don't hear too much about because students don't

seem to be interested in power. They seem to have all they need because they have so much freedom now. The institution really doesn't do much regulate their lives so long as they don't shoot somebody or cheat on their exams. But, the students have a good deal of responsibility and are treated as adults.

Why does the university enter into a relationship with students? Is it beneficial for students, the university or both?

I think the word university is really the answer to that. We're not an institution that just gives information out over the Internet. The idea of a university is a community where it is continuous learning. We come together at a place called a campus like the one here in Gainesville, Florida because somehow that interaction between students and faculty and students and students and all of us together somehow becomes greater as a whole. We learn more about history or physics or ourselves or all three of those by the interaction of working together in an academic community. I think that will always be the case despite the wonderful advances of computers and so-forth. What is the university? It's not just the faculty. It's not just the students. It's not just administration. It's all of that together and it's goal is to educate students and to prepare them as best as we can for whatever it is that they intend to do and we think that that can be done most effectively with a process of interaction and so the university needs that kind of student activity and involvement. We call that these days engaged education. Our students are engaged with their academic work.

How would you say that the typical student here would describe diversity on campus?

This is a generation (the 18 to 22 year olds) that has grown up with some cynicism in that regard. I notice it in their attitudes. However when they get serious about it rather than just off the top of their heads kinds of things, I'm quite impressed with their commitments, their understanding. And frankly I think that many of them understand the benefits educationally and culturally of being with people with a whole wide variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds as opposed to typically retreating off of campus with a group of people you went to high school with, in that comfortable thing where you never have to interact with anybody. So I am quite pleased with the attitudes of white, black, Asian and Hispanic students. I think they are way ahead of where my generation was. They've grown up in a different time and I am much more optimistic than I am pessimistic about their appreciation of diversity, their understanding of it. Their willingness to make it work.

Do you think minority students see diversity in campus differently than non-minority students?

Yes, I suspect that they do. I think it depends upon the minority group. I have had many conversations and listened to many minority students about this topic and of course their responses are all over the lot. I would say that for the most part African-American students seem to be less optimistic about relationship among the races and diversity than

perhaps the other groups. But frankly I am much more encouraged than I was 20 or 30 years ago.

Can you think of any way the university has committed to diversity?

Sure there are lots of them. We recruit very vigorously for students, we have specially trained minority counselors who do that, we have extensive scholarship programs because it is an extremely competitive market. It's the most brutal competition there is to try and recruit especially African-American students. We're competing with offers from the Ivy League so we recruit very hard. We do the same thing at the graduate level and at the professional schools. With faculty members and staff we have made extensive efforts over the last 25 years to expand the curriculum to reflect different views and different perspectives in that particular discipline. And we encourage in student affairs, which is something I know something about, interaction through clubs and organizations between students of every background. It's a very strong emphasis at this organization.

Do you think that paying attention to diversity helps the university build better relationships with students?

Absolutely. I have been a part of those efforts here and at two other institutions. It's been one of the major reasons I got into this field and I've seen this on three different campuses and it's nothing complicated or sophisticated, it's reaching out, showing a concern and listening to the experiences of real people at a particular institution. I remember a conversation when I was Dean of Students at Iowa State back in 1968, we

just called together all of the black females students on campus which was only about 80 students and we got them in a room. First of all they were extremely appreciative of just the invitation to come to the administration building and have some Cokes, and coffee and tea and just talk about their experiences here. And well it's no high flue tent activity but the major message they had for the university when we finally got them comfortable enough to talk was that we wish you'd recruit more black men. Sometimes you over look the obvious. Ask students how they like their class? How do they like the faculty? Well, they are 19 years old so they're going to be thinking about different things. The African-American women then, and unfortunately still now, outnumbered the men two to one. It was a daily problem for those students.

So diversity of the student body is important to the university?

Absolutely and not for some public relations reason, not to knock public relations. This is a public university. It is owned by all the people of the state. It is for all of the people not just a segment of the people. The people who work here, even the president, do not own this university. We are simply the stewards caring out the policies that the public decides that we should. This is the people's university. And that means all of the people. So we are not serving the people's needs in this state if we are not doing everything that we can to make this equally accessible and successful for every group in the state, not just some privileged group depending on money, place of residence or color of skin. Or gender. We used to be all white male for many years. Granted there was an institution

for white females and one for black students. But that reflected the cultural and racial history of this part of the country.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brigitta R. Brunner, daughter of Carl and Regina Brunner, was born on May 15, 1971 in Syracuse, New York. Her parents now live in Allentown, Pennsylvania and her sister is working on her master's degree at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Brigitta graduated from Parkland High School in Orefield, Pennsylvania in 1989. She completed her bachelor's degree in Marketing Communications at Juniata College in 1993 and earned her master's degree in communication, specializing in public relations, at Auburn University in 1995.

Brigitta conducts research in public relations. Specifically, her work examines public relations' relationships and diversity issues. She has published in the Journal of Public Relations Research and has presented her studies at the International Communication Association, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and other conferences.

Brigitta has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where she will begin teaching in August 2000.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Linda Childers Hon. Chair
Associate Professor of Journalism and
Communications

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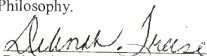
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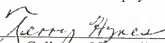
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Journalism and Communications and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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